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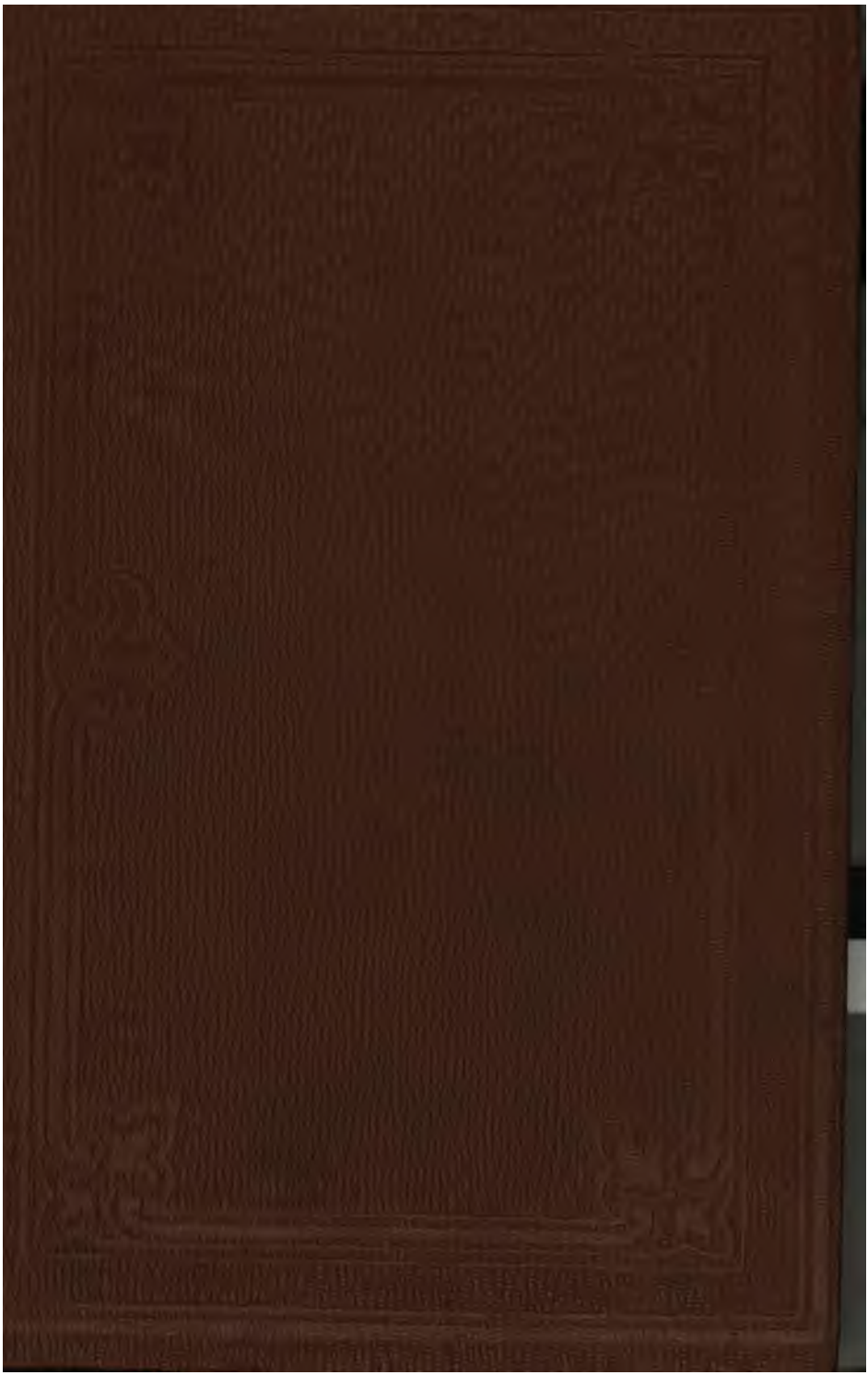

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THE CAUCASUS

AND ITS

PEOPLE,

WITH

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THEIR WARS,

AND

A SKETCH OF THE

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE RENOWNED CHIEF

SCHAMYL.

BY

LOUIS MOSER

LONDON:
DAVID NUTT, 270, STRAND.
1856.

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LONDON:
T. RICHARDS, GREAT QUEEN STREET.

TO

WILLIAM FANE DE SALIS, ESQ.,

DIRECTOR OF THE PENINSULAR AND ORIENTAL STEAM NAVIGATION COMPANY.

SOUTHAMPTON, 1856.

DEAR SIR,

I gladly avail myself of your permission to present to you this little work on the Caucasus, compiled during leisure hours in your Company's Steam Transport Service, from French, German, and original Russian sources.

I have been induced to offer it by the interest you are known to take in the affairs of the East, and also by the position you hold in the great Company which has taken so prominent a part in furthering the objects of the Crimean War, and in

bringing European energy to bear on Asiatic torpor.

The brave and long-continued struggle of the Caucasian races, against an enemy so greatly superior to them in physical force, has enlisted the sympathies of Europe in their favour; and it seems probable that events now in progress may render it desirable to obtain more accurate information concerning a country and people hitherto so imperfectly known, and, it may be added, so difficult to know well.

My little work can pretend to no merit but that of authenticity; but, on this ground, I would fain hope that it may prove of some public service, and that you will accept it as a trifling tribute of esteem and grateful acknowledgment of kindness received from you by,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient Servant,

Louis Moser.

THE CAUCASUS AND ITS PEOPLE.

CHAPTER I.

Superb Scenery of the Caucasus.—Traditions connected with it.—The loftiest Peaks.—Side Ranges.—The Black Mountains.—The Andisch Range.—The Kaitach.—The Rivers of the Caucasus.—The Kouban, Terek, Kouma, etc.—Their tributaries.—The vegetation of the Caucasus.—Its amazing variety.—The animal kingdom, etc.

In no region of the earth are the striking contrasts of scenery, in which nature often seems to delight, more magnificently displayed than in the Caucasus.

From the banks of the Don, and far and wide along the course of the Manytch and Kouma, stretches a weary waste of barren

steppe country, which gradually loses itself in the inhospitable slopes that bound the Caspian Sea. Abruptly and unexpectedly, however, from this dreary and monotonous plain, there arise, first a chain of hills, and then a mighty range of mountains, towering ever higher and higher, and throwing out spurs that slope into and embosom broad, sunny, smiling valleys, while, at the same time, the loftiest peaks rise to the height of everlasting snow; where the glaciers only melt sufficiently to feed the torrents, which leap roaring and foaming from cliff and cavern.

This varied and rugged range of mountains is covered in many parts with forests of the most luxuriant vegetation, though, as we have said, its wild, sharp peaks pierce beyond the line of perpetual snow: it extends from the Black Sea to the Caspian, and forms nature's boundary between the two

continents of Europe and Asia; and on this range, with its numerous branches, offsets and headlands, the name of the Caucasus has been bestowed.

Tradition has chained Prometheus to the highest point of the Caucasus, and laid the scene of the Golden Fleece expedition on the lovely slopes that overhang the Black Sea.

The ark of Noah, too, is said to have rested on a peak of one of its branches, but beyond this, both history and tradition are nearly silent concerning this mountain land; and there are, even at this hour, extensive tracts of country untrodden by European foot, and known to us only by the vague and uncertain glimpses afforded by hearsay or imagination.

The range of the Caucasus, with its thousand bare and fantastically shaped summits, extends for a length of one hundred and fifty miles, from Anapa, on the

Black Sea, to Cape Abcharan, on the Caspian. Its breadth varies continually, as it sometimes spreads out its branches, and opens into broad acclivities, and sometimes contracts into narrow passes, and sinks into extensive valleys or deep ravines.

Amongst the loftiest points in the principal range, proceeding from west to east, rise most conspicuously the following peaks: the Oschten, Nisiri, Maruch, Dschumantan, Tuturguh, and Elbruz; about the middle of the range stands out pre-eminently the Kasbeck, and to the east and south-east, the Kadori, the Sakoris-twer, and the Kah-dagh.

In the neighbourhood of the pass of Dariel, the loftiest heights present a basaltic formation, though the lower hill ranges are of chalk, slate, and limestone. The Elbruz, the loftiest peak of the Caucasian range, attains, according to some travellers, the height of 15,400, or, to others,

of 16,330 feet; and this Colossus is held in high veneration by the people, who believing it to be the abode of good and bad spirits, look up to it with awe not unmixed with fear. The next in height is the Kasbek, also called the Msinwari; it is estimated at 14,400 feet, and it is constantly covered, from summit to base, with ice and snow.

Among the spurs and side ranges of the Caucasus, that on the north-west runs nearly parallel with the principal chain; it is called the Black Mountain range, in contradistinction to the chief, snow-covered one, whose branches, extending north-west and south-east, are connected with each other by steep cliffs, deep precipices, and impenetrable forests. These branches enlarge and extend as they approach the centre, but towards the north they throw off numerous arms to the Kouma Steppes, where, after

forming the promontory of Beschtan, they sink into the forest range of Sheb Karagatch. To the south, an extensive branch stretches in gentle declivities in the direction of the river Kour, meeting the projecting spur of Mount Ararat. Towards the east, the principal chain divides itself at different points into two ridges, one forming the wide extending elevations of the Andisch range, while, towards the north-east, a second branch forms that of the Kaitach; this stretches to the Caspian, after encircling larger or smaller valleys, which are again broken up by isolated mountains and hills.

Of the various rivers which diverge from the northern flank of the Caucasus the most important are, the Kouban, the Terek, and the Kouma, besides the Podkouma, a branch stream of the latter, which runs towards the steppe from which it takes its name.

The Kouban has its source in the north-

ern slope of the Elbruz; and after leaving the hills by a wide bend to the westward, and receiving the waters of several tributaries, it falls into the Kouban-Liman, which flows into the Black Sea.

On the right of its course the Kouban receives no river of any importance; but the streams which join it on the left, rising mostly in the high and dark range above them, deserve some mention, not only on their own accounts, but from their serving to mark more distinctly the abodes of the several Caucasian races.

The names of the rivers, which flow from east to west, are the Great and Little Indtchik or Selentchuk, the Uruss, the Great and Lesser Laba, the Chodz, the Schadgasha, the Supa, Kara-Kouban, and Afips.

The tributaries of the Kouban are more numerous than those of the Terek. The

latter also takes it rise in the snowy range, and soon entering a narrow valley, follows an eastern course, till it falls into the Caspian Sea, whither it conveys all the streams that rise in the north and north-eastern part of the Caucasus. These tributaries join the Terek on the left, as do also the waters of the four united rivers, Malka, Baksan, Tshegem, and Tcherek, and the rivulets Uruch, Aredon, Fiag, Makaldon, Gnaldon, and others of less importance. The south, and more especially the south-western slopes of the Caucasus, are most abundantly supplied with water; and some of the streams which rise in these regions take the direction of the Black Sea, while the rest join the river Kour, as it flows from west to east, at the foot of the Caucasus, and at length fall with it into the Caspian Sea near Salian.

Among the former we find the Schacho,

Gebs, Tshab, Inabs, Ardo, Bsyb, Engari or Ingar, Iskenitz, Guali, and Rioni; among the latter, the Didi-Liachoi, Aragoi, with the Gudamaquari, the Jori, and Alasami.

Among the tributaries of the Kour, the largest are the rivers rising in the south and south-eastern slopes of the Caucasus, and flowing directly into the Caspian Sea; of these the most worthy of note is the Kissra, a river formed by the confluence of four different streams, namely, the Anditch, Avarsh, Kara, and Kasamuch-Kissra. The waters of these, after meeting, force themselves between the Anditch and Kaitach range of hills, and fall into the Caspian Sea, under the name of the Szulak. The Koura, also, and the Samura, are rivers worthy of notice.

The natural boundaries of this highland region are, therefore, the rivers Kouban and Terek on the north, the valley of the

Kour on the south, the Caspian Sea on the east, and the Black Sea on the west. Within these limits nature has collected the characteristics of the most widely differing landscapes: inhospitable rocks, wild torrents, and terrific chasms, with the treasures of the richest and most fertile vegetation, and an almost boundless variety of fruits and flowers, which are elsewhere found dispersed through various zones and climates. Here we have the plane tree and the box-wood of unusual size and thickness; there the mulberry and the vine, which in the beautiful wilds of Mingrelia grow without any care; the oak and the elm, the ash, the birch and the pine, form almost impenetrable forests; the whole of the Alpine flora is found here, and destructive creepers, along with the lovely myrtle, rosalia, laurel, azalea, rhododendron, and many other flowers, as well as fruits, namely, figs,

chesnuts, and melons of extraordinary size and flavour. The richest abundance of vegetable produce, in short, is found blooming in the very midst of barren unfruitful rocks, that seem to defy the very vegetative power of nature.

The animal kingdom of the Caucasus is no less exuberant; horses, sheep, cattle, and buffaloes are numerous, as well as wild boars, jackals, hyenas, panthers, chamois, goats, and deer; besides hares, pheasants, and all kinds of game; fowls, too, and bees are in abundance; and among the occasional visitors may be mentioned the bear, the denizen of the north, and even at times the tiger. The mineral treasures of the Caucasian ranges are as yet little known; and the prevalent scarcity of salt often exposes the mountaineers to great privations.

On the whole, nature has lavished her bounties most generously on the soil of the

Caucasus, and she has been no less munificent in endowing the aboriginal inhabitants of these mountains with the mental qualifications for enabling them to appreciate her blessings.

CHAPTER II.

The Personal and Mental Qualifications of the Caucasian Races.—Princes and Nobles.—Their Privileges. —Great Public Meetings.—Brilliant appearance of the Assembly.—The Debates.—The Brotherhoods. Judicial Proceedings.—Lawful and Unlawful Robbery.—Leading features of the Caucasian character. —Slavery.—Trade in Girls.—Warlike Expeditions.

THE Caucasian races are of fine physical organization, and possess preeminently the susceptibility of intellectual culture. Though of different origin, and separated by language and dialects into many tribes, there is a striking agreement in the character, manners, and customs of the whole people; and all the races of the Caucasus adhere strictly to one and the same code of oral and traditional law, by which their communities, their households, their customs, and

even their dresses, are governed and regulated.

It must be acknowledged, however, that while their virtues are strengthened and upheld by these traditions, their national vices are often excited by them to savage excesses. The tendencies of the people are all republican; and most tribes admit neither of aristocracy nor hereditary titles. All men being equal among them, the jurisdiction of the chiefs or princes (called in the different dialects Psahy, By, Bei, Beg, and so on) is exceedingly limited; and that of the nobles (Usden, Work, or Mursden) is still more restricted, unless they possess means of upholding the lustre of their ancestral rank by a rich showy appearance, or by preeminent valour on the battle-field. On the other hand, great homage is paid to aged men of unblemished character, as well as to those who have dis-

tinguished themselves by exploits against the common enemy; and also to minstrels.

The life of the mountaineer of the Caucasus is one continued series of dangers and hardships, imposed upon him by the necessity of defending his mountain home: he must, therefore, in order to gain lasting influence over his tribe, make continual displays of dexterity, perseverance, and undaunted courage.

Where princes reign a small tribute is paid to them, and they, as well as the nobles, have a right to a hospitable reception in every house, rich or poor, which they may enter, and they may remain as long as the provisions last. In all other respects they are on an equality with the rest of the clan, and must obey the will of the popular assemblies denominated Tafes, which are called together to discuss matters concerning military service, or when a

battle is to be fought, a feast to be celebrated, or judicial business, such as the trial or condemnation of a culprit, to be transacted. These meetings are held mostly on moonlight nights, in sacred groves, or under a huge primeval tree, near which is generally to be seen an ancient decayed cross, the last memorial of the Christian sires assigned to the Caucasian races, and to which there is usually attached an emotion of religious awe, originating in some tradition.

On the occasion of one of these meetings, every man arrays himself in his best attire, and all vie with one another in the picturesque style of their adornment, and in the display of bright arms and jewelled dirks, as well as of formidable javelins and brilliant feats of horsemanship, so that there is a great deal of pleasurable excitement in these nightly scenes, by which the fiery

spirits of the warriors are animated to still higher martial ardour, and the hills are continually made to reecho their tremendous battle-cry.

The Speaker and Council of Elders are seated on the turf in the centre of the assembly, in order that they may be seen and heard by every one present; around them a circle is formed by the middle-aged warriors, whose steeds are tethered in a ring outside that formed by their owners, and this outer circle is again surrounded by the youth on horseback.

Whenever an elder rises to address the meeting, the deafening clash of arms, the clatter of a thousand tongues, the stamping of a multitude of horses, and the whole many-voiced tumult, is hushed in an instant; and in profound silence, and with deep emotion, the assembly listens to the counsel addressed to it by the venerable

speaker, whose mystical, enthusiastic eloquence often excites his hearers to heroic efforts in defence of their mountain homes, by promising them, finally, that whoever is slain on the battle-field in the conflict with the enemy, shall be thence instantaneously transferred to Paradise.

When the speaker has concluded his harangue, his proposals are submitted to the deliberations, and then to the votes of the assembly; these are given first by the aged, and then downwards to the youngest members present, all having an equal right to express their opinions freely; and the majority of votes constituting any measure so agreed on, is law, holy and binding on the whole community.

Before setting out to attend one of these great public meetings, each Brotherhood or smaller community usually discusses and resolves on the measures proposed to be

advocated in the larger assembly, which consists of ten of these Brotherhoods, and is empowered in the public meetings to pass laws, from which there is no appeal.

In the Brotherhood the motto is—"One for all, and all for one"; it undertakes to provide for the widows and orphans of fallen warriors; and in case of one of its members being unable when he wishes to marry to raise the funds necessary for the purchase of a bride, this is done for him by the community.

Should one of the clan be convicted of theft of any goods or chattels belonging to a friendly neighbour, and unable to pay the fine (mostly a certain number of oxen or sheep) to which he has been condemned by public sentence, it has to be paid for him by a contribution raised among the Brotherhood to which he belongs.

Robberies committed on the property of

unfriendly neighbours, however, especially if well planned and boldly executed, are greatly applauded.

Should disputes occur, and the disputants not be able to come to any agreement, umpires are chosen, by whose decision the parties have to abide.

The majority of the tribes, and especially the Lesgheans, cling to the principle of retributive justice.

Guided by the law, "that he who sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed", they regard it as a solemn duty to hunt after the aggressor till they have laid him low; and this barbarous custom has given rise to sanguinary feuds, which last from generation to generation.

These mountaineers are taught, that the spirits of their relatives who have been slain can never rest in peace until they shall have been avenged; and not only is a

brother or friend of one who has fallen, always ready to pursue an assassin to death, but he can seldom be induced to give quarter to Russian prisoners of war, lest he should thus chance to leave the *manes* of some ancestors or brethren unavenged.

Cowardice, treachery, or the violation of the law of hospitality, are all regarded among these races as unpardonable crimes; and whoever is known to have committed any aggression on the person or goods of a guest, is, according to law, to be tied hand and foot, flung into an abyss, and left to perish without mercy. A coward is regarded as an outcast from the community; and should he be prevented by disease from leaving the abodes of his tribe, he is condemned to live and feed with the dogs.

The leading features of the Caucasian character, in short, are valour, pride, re-

verence for age, and a high sense of the duty of hospitality. When a guest enters any dwelling, the host considers himself as bound to wait on him, to serve him, to minister to his wants, provide for his comfort, and afford him every gratification in his power. The best place in the house, the choicest morsels at the dinner, are allotted to him, and the members of the family vie with one another in endeavouring to amuse him; the utmost care is taken never to disturb his repose; and should he fall sick, he is nursed with the utmost anxiety and tenderness.

Were enemies lying in wait for the stranger, his host would not fail to protect him; and should the threshold be violated by his pursuers, the hostess would offer him her breast, and by this act constitute him at once a member of the family, who would then peril property and life in his

defence. Such extreme cases as this, however, are of rare occurrence.

The visit of a minstrel is regarded as a great honour to a family; and every guest is, on his departure, furnished by his host with letters of introduction, which give him a claim to further hospitalities on the road to his place of destination. Prisoners of war and stragglers only are claimed as bondsmen; of the latter, few are found among the Caucasian tribes, and such as are met with are usually in the enjoyment of the same privileges as the rest of the family. Should the bondsman, however, be guilty of any offence, the master of the house has a right to put him to death.

One of the darkest features of Caucasian life is the existence of the Slave Trade, which, notwithstanding the vigilant opposition of the English Ambassador at Constantinople, is still a favourite object with

these races, and often carried on, in defiance of all obstacles, with the most daring intrepidity. On most occasions, the father himself sells his daughters to a broker who supplies the Turkish harems; and frequently receives a good round sum for his merchandise.

The poor girls, on their parts, by no means object to the proceeding, as they are taught from their infancy to long for the luxurious idleness of the harems of Stamboul, and regard it as a kind of earthly Paradise.

Warlike expeditions in pursuit of plunder, either to the Russian territory, or to that of a neighbouring tribe, have great charms for a people accustomed to constant exertion, and delighting in tumult and activity.

When one of these is in contemplation, the first step is the ceremony of taking the

"Blood Oath", as it is called, which binds those who take it to perseverance in valorous effort, and to standing by each other to the death. The bravest warrior among them is then chosen as leader, and the occasion is celebrated by a feast and a dance. The warriors after this retire to rest; but at daybreak they rise and set forward on their march, ascending mountains, crossing rivers, and forcing their way through primeval forests, till they reach the point of attack. The march is mostly planned so as to surprise the enemy in sleep, and in such case the deadly onslaught usually spares no one.

Should any prisoners be made, they are speedily driven to some place of security, where the spoil is deposited; and the retreat of the assailants is generally as sudden as their appearance.

Prisoners of war often prefer death to captivity; they destroy their arms and mu-

tilate their horses, that they may not render service to the enemy; and sometimes, finally, embrace the first opportunity to precipitate themselves into some rocky abyss, rather than endure the passing their lives in bondage.

Sanguinary battles are often fought for the sake of recapturing the body of a slain friend; as it is considered a great misfortune and disgrace that one who has fought and bled in the cause of the common weal should be buried on a hostile soil.

CHAPTER III.

Mode of Life among the Caucasians.—Food.—Dress.—Marriage.—Education of the Boys.—The Attalik.—Education of the Girls.—Medical Treatment in Circassia.—Funeral Ceremonies.—Lamentation and Rejoicing.

THE ordinary mode of life among the Caucasians is frugal, and in strict accordance with their social condition. Their houses and huts are for the most part poor and meagre in construction, seldom exhibiting the smallest sign of prosperity. A few have dwellings rudely built of stone, but the majority of the habitations are constructed of pine boards, roughly put together and thatched over; others consist merely of hurdle-work plastered with clay and mortar; and though they contain several rooms,

they are without windows or chimneys, and are used as common resting places for men and cattle. Some tribes have no houses at all, but live in caves.

The Caucasian villages are mostly formed in a circle, in the centre of which the cattle are placed for security during the night; but others consist of a few huts, widely scattered about the forest, and the poverty of the inhabitants seems legibly written on every threshold.

Their ordinary food is a preparation from coarse millet, and a piece of roast meat and a draught of beer, which they occasionally brew, are the greatest luxuries they know. Knives, forks, and plates are dispensed with in a Caucasian household, and considered superfluities.

As the Caucasians are exceedingly fond of their arms, one of their greatest amusements is to polish their jeweled dirks, and

often richly ornamented guns and pistols, or the long straight sword, which they wear in a coloured scabbard. Helmets, shirts of mail, etc., were formerly worn by them, but they have been discontinued since the use of fire-arms has become general.

The dress of the Caucasians is often rich and picturesque; the men wear a long silk undercoat, and a short overcoat without a collar; a closely-fitting tunic, with neatly worked cartridge pockets of red morocco in front, yellow boots, and a head-dress of Astrachan lambskin, with a crown of crimson cloth or leather; their silken sash, or ornamented leather girdle, is well stocked with weapons; and a felt cloak, for the protection of their gay attire, is their constant companion.

The women wear robes ornamented with fur and silver lace, and reaching to the knees, where they are met by trowsers,

mostly of silk, and over the head and face is worn the *Ishadra*, a white and often beautifully embroidered veil. The poorer classes are, of course, more scantily attired.

Family life in the Caucasus is generally entered upon at an early age; a fact that might be in a great measure accounted for by many circumstances arising out of the peculiar position of the country, the isolation of many of its valleys, and the difficulty and occasional impossibility of communication between them. Polygamy is found among only a few of the tribes, and even with them it may be regarded as the exception rather than the rule. Marriages take place at so very early an age, that a girl of eighteen would be looked upon as a decided old maid, and be very likely therefore to remain unmarried for the rest of her life.

Men of the middle classes choose their

wives for themselves, according to taste; but the matrimonial partners of the sons of nobles are chosen for them. In the negotiations carried on concerning the marriage, the stipulations as to the amount of horses, slaves, cattle, and valuable arms which are to be given, form a very important item; when these are concluded, the bride, it is said, is so anxiously watched over by her relatives, that the lover has to resort to many stratagems before he can succeed in even seeing her for a few moments.

The wedding is celebrated with noisy feasting and revelry, in the midst of which the bridegroom has to rush in, and, with the help of a few daring young men, to carry off the lady by force; and by this process she becomes his lawful wife.

The Caucasians are said in general to treat their wives well, but now and then they send them back to their father's

house,—an affront which gives rise to the bitterest feuds. Adultery is punished with death.

In the education of the male children we find among the Circassians many traits of character and custom, curiously analogous to those of the ages of chivalry in Western Europe.

As it was the practice for young aspirants to the honours of knighthood not to be left to be educated in their parental homes, but to be sent into the household of some noble to be trained to the practice of chivalric exercises, so the son of a Circassian chief is taken from home, and consigned to the charge of a tutor or foster-father, called an Attalik, and until he attains the age when his education is supposed to be complete, it is considered an unpardonable weakness in the real father even to desire to see his child. Boys are regarded rather as the

property of the tribe than of their parents; and should the latter have neglected to choose an Attalik for their son, any one who feels so disposed may offer to undertake the charge. There are even instances of enthusiastic educators carrying off a pupil by force; and this is not, by Circassian law, a punishable offence.

A male child at his birth is presented with a bow and a quiver of arrows, as symbols of his future career; and to these is added an amulet, to guard him from witchcraft, and from the influence of the evil eye.

The Circassians being entirely ignorant of science and letters, understand by education chiefly gymnastic exercises, riding, swimming, and the use of warlike weapons; but the young pupil is also instructed in the art of stealing with expertness, as well as in eloquence, in order that he may one

day shine as an orator at the public meetings.

Having attained to manhood, the young mountaineer is conducted in triumph back to the house of his parents, where, at a feast held on the occasion, he displays his acquirements before his friends and relatives. The guardian or tutor—the Attálik as he is called—is then overwhelmed with presents and congratulations, and he enjoys ever afterwards the highest consideration in the family.

The education of female children is left to the mothers, by whom they are taught to attend to domestic affairs, to be skilful horsewomen, and also the use of arms.

On the decease of the head of the family —the father—the management of the household devolves on the mother; but should the sons not agree to remain together, the father's property is divided among

them, the eldest obtaining the largest share, and with it the house, of which he then becomes the possessor. The smallest portion is given to the younger son.

Death being looked upon in this country, as almost every where else, as a most important family event, funerals are performed with great pomp; that of a warrior especially with extravagant ceremonies. Illness among the Caucasians is commonly attributed to evil spirits, which they endeavour to drive out of the patient by all kinds of torture and by tumultuous noise. Under the impression that the spirit exercises his malignant influence over the patient chiefly during his sleep, they no sooner see him sinking into slumber than they take every method they can devise to disturb him, and if noise will not keep him awake, they sprinkle cold water over his face whenever he attempts to close his eyes. When, at

last, death puts an end to his sufferings, the women commence the funeral dirge; tearing the hair from their heads with frantic lamentations, and lacerating their hands and faces in a frightful manner, and the men lash themselves with whips till they are covered with blood.

No manifestation of this kind is made, however, when the deceased has been struck by lightning, as it is considered then that he is one of the chosen people, who has been recalled to the Most High without the intervention of a mediator. The body is in such cases interred on the eighth day, on the spot where the event occurred. The remains of persons who die of disease are first put into a bath, and then laid out upon a carpet in their best clothes; and should the body be that of a warrior, it is burnt in the garments he has worn in battle.

While the preparations are being made for the funeral feast and the interment, the remains are watched by the female relatives, who weep and lament over it incessantly. It is then borne in solemn procession, still amidst frantic lamentations, to its last resting place, whence the mourners return in the same manner to the habitation; but as soon as they arrive, they suddenly exchange their doleful lamentation for hearty enjoyment of the good things set before them for the feast; and though they are careful to commemorate the virtues of the departed, they do not suffer the remembrance of them to interfere with their indulgence in the most unrestrained hilarity. The wealthy repeat these funeral feasts at short intervals, on or near the graves of their deceased relatives.

CHAPTER IV.

The Religion of the Caucasians.—Relics of Christianity mingled with Paganism.—Social Recreations.—Love of Music.—Homage paid to Minstrels.—Language of the various Tribes.—The Tcherkess, or Circassians.—Their beauty.—Artificial modes of improving it.—Pride of Birth among Nobles.—The Great and Little Kabardah.—The Tribes inhabiting Tcherkeskaia.—The Abassians, or Abchases.

It would be very difficult to point out precisely what are the religious doctrines entertained by these mountaineers, as they are extremely vague and indefinite.

The ruined churches—the decayed and mouldering wooden crosses, found in many places in groves and forests—the frequent occurrence of some Christian rite being found still in use among the tribes of the Western Caucasus, lead inevitably to the

conclusion that, at some period, the Christian religion must have been prevalent here; but if so, the spirit of Christianity has long since entirely disappeared, and been superseded by that of Islamism, introduced in days of yore, it is said, by a certain princess and her nobles. The majority of the people have but a confused conception of a deity, whom they worship in ceremonies compounded of the usages of Christianity, Mahommedanism, and Paganism. Some of the tribes still pay homage to a God of Thunder and a God of Lightning, as well as to Gods of Winds, Waters, and Forests; but as they have no priests, except the Mahommedan Mollahs, the office of consecrating the oxen and sheep, brought as sacrifices to these deities (and offered in traditionally sacred groves and forests), is usually performed by aged men of unimpeached character.

The feast of Easter is still kept nevertheless with something like Christian ceremonies; and in the beginning of spring, the people observe a long fast, after which they have a festival, at which they present coloured eggs to each other, a custom prevalent in Russia, and many parts of Germany, at the same season.

In a few scattered mountain caves, a kind of worship is paid to the prophet Elias, but without any reference to Christian tradition; and the people in general are greatly under the influence of childish surperstitions, and fears of witchcraft and of ghosts.

The principal occupation of the Caucasian people is that of cattle-breeding, which they carry on on an extensive scale, the herds of some owners amounting to thirty thousand head, and many of their horses are of excellent breed and much prized.

In agriculture, the Caucasian has made

very little progress, and under his mode of tillage, even the most fertile soil yields but a very meagre produce. Of handicrafts-men there are few to be found, except armourers, and most of the furniture and cooking utensils are of home manufacture.

The women are expert and industrious, as weavers and embroiderers, and produce really wonderful specimens of domestic workmanship in cloth, shawls, carpets, veils, and gold and silver lace, with which they ornament the furs so abundantly supplied by the various animals of the forests.

The Caucasians also supply themselves with gunpowder, an article in very great demand among them.

Music and song are held in high estimation, but they are as yet in a very low stage of development; the only musical instruments in use are a kind of violin, a fife, and a small drum, and the melodies performed

on them, though plaintive, are exceedingly monotonous; but they are nevertheless greatly admired by the public, and no festival is complete without the presence of the minstrel, who, in public estimation, is only second to the brave warrior, and is treated with the greatest veneration by young and old. The women are generally eager to manifest their admiration for him, and the young damsels especially desire his notice and favour; the men, too, pay him homage, but not always quite unmingled with jealousy.

The talents of these bards are mostly displayed in impromptu effusions in praise of daring deeds in the battle field, in eulogiums on the warriors, or compliments to the virtues and beauty of the ladies who happen to be present at the party. Next to the song, the national dance is the favourite amusement of the Caucasians, and

it is as bold and martial in its character as the people themselves. In general there is much free social intercourse among them, and from these pleasures their women are not excluded. The only drawback on the advantage of these gatherings is, that when, as frequently happens, the men take to amusing themselves with sham fights, and playing at soldiers, their impetuosity often occasions accidents; and in the bustle of their evolutions, with foot and horse, deadly wounds are inflicted, which turn the scene of festivity into an arena of mourning, and, what is still worse, give rise to animosities that beget bloody feuds, continuing through many generations.

The valley of the river Terek, which, as we have seen, rises near the centre of the Caucasian range, and flowing eastward, falls into the Caspian Sea,—forms a kind of division of the territory of the Caucasus into a

North-Western and South-Eastern district, the inhabitants of which differ essentially in language, though the Tatar dialect is extensively known among them, and used as a general medium of communication, and the nomadic tribes retain commonly their mother tongue. Of these, the first to be mentioned are the Tcherkess, or Circassians, as they are called in England, or Adiges, as they call themselves, whose origin is rather uncertain; they declare their primitive home to have been in Arabia; but even if this be true, they have dwelt so long in the Caucasus, that they may fairly be counted among the aborigines. This fine race is renowned for physical strength, beauty of feature, and symmetry of form; they are agile and active in the highest degree, and surpass all the other tribes in their noble and manly bearing, as well as in the cleanliness of their persons,

and their tasteful dress. They often resort, it is true, to rather strange methods, in order to preserve or augment the charms and attractions with which nature has endowed them. The young girls, for instance, at the first stage of their development towards womanhood, are sewed up into a pair of tight leather stays, which they wear till their wedding-day, when it is cut off with a sharp dirk. It is adopted, of course, with a view to obtaining a fine slender waist.

The character and mental capacity of the Tcherkess are not inferior to the promise of their personal appearance. Chivalrous and hospitable, true to their engagements, considerate and respectful towards their women, benevolent to the poor, they combine so many admirable traits of character, as to have just claims on the sympathy often manifested for them in Europe; and

though from their continual intercourse with their neighbours, their frequent wars, and their nomadic way of life, they are seldom found without any mixture of other races, the amalgamation has been oftener advantageous than otherwise, especially to their nobles. Most of the Tcherkess tribes are governed by princes, though their authority is very limited; but both princes and nobles are excessively proud of their descent, and manifest this pride in their matrimonial alliances. Marriages between persons of unequal rank are seldom heard of, as they are greatly discountenanced.

Mahommedanism has made great progress among the Circassians, while Christianity, though it must have been extensively known to their forefathers, has scarcely left any other trace than that of the beforementioned ruins and crosses, still to be seen near their habitations. Their language,

which, on account of its modulations, is exceedingly difficult, is spoken throughout the district called the Kabardah, from the Laba to the Black Sea. This district borders to the west on the Molka, to the north on the Terek, to the east and south-east on the Sundscha and Kumbalei, but due south it leans on the great mountain chain. It is divided by the Terek into two parts, the Great and the Little Kabardah, of which the former, though in the southern part mountainous, is throughout fertile, and abounding with luxuriant vegetation. The Little Kabardah extends along a mountain range, running from west to east, nearly parallel with the great chain; its northern part is barren, but the southern thickly wooded.

The Kabardine villages consist of forty or fifty houses built in a circle, and generally bearing the name of the noblest of the

inhabitants; but both the name and the situation of these villages are frequently changed; for as the people till the land very indolently, and never manure it, as soon as they have exhausted one tract they remove to another.

In 1822, the majority of the inhabitants of the Kabardah left their native soil to cross the Kuban, and settle between the Great Indshik, or Selendshuk, and the Uruss.

The following tribes live in Tcherkeskaia, or Circassia Proper; that is, the territory bounded on the north by the Kuban, to the east (on the northern side of the great range) by the Laba, and beyond it, by the Sodcha.

1. The Bestenians, who are found along the Upper Laba, and in the valleys on both sides of the mountains, towards the Uruss and Chodz, where the latter joins the Laba.

2. The Mochotians, who occupy the base

of the Black Mountains, between the Laba and the Fars; they live in cleanly and neatly kept villages, and cultivate the land, but in spring and harvest-time they travel with their herds of cattle as far as the Kuban.

3. The Tenirgoi, also called the Kemurquähes, to which belong the smaller tribes of the Jerogokon, Ademi, and Hattuquähe, whose dwelling places border on the south, on those of the Mochotians, and extend from the Laba towards the Kuban. They possess larger herds than any other tribe, sometimes numbering as many as from thirty to forty thousand head.

4. The Bseduch and the Gatzakoi are spread over the territory situated on both sides of the Supé to the Afips.

5. The Abasechs are found in the valleys of the chief mountain range, to the south of the Bseduch, and they extend over the

southern declivities to the Black Sea. This tribe is rather numerous, and their Auls or villages consist of detached, fenced-in, and pallisaded farms, surrounded by fields and woods, and held as freehold property by the cultivators, who are brave and warlike in their character.

6. The Shapsuchs live westward of the Bseduchs and Abasechs, on both sides of the chief mountain range, and on the Black Sea coast. They are more numerous than the Abasechs, and are distinguished for their love of independence, their free institutions, and their personal bravery. They do not acknowledge the supreme authority of any prince.

7. The Natagoi, or Natkokuatches, is a tribe composed of the remnants of several others, which are separately extinct. Their warlike spirit and love of independence, has spread the terror of their name far over

the Kouban, and they are commonly regarded as a race of marauders; they live on the west of the Shapsuchs, between the Kouban Taman and Black Sea; and their territory is particularly rich in wild honey, which is found in crevices of the rocks; it is not glutinous, but hard and firm, and it has to be dissolved in water before it can be used.

The second principal race of the western Caucasus is that of the Abassians, or Abchases, who differ widely from their neighbours in language and feature. They have small faces and long noses, and their language is quite distinct, not bearing the slightest resemblance to any other, either Asiatic or European, dialect. Their manners and customs are much like those of the Circassians, by whom they were formerly overpowered and driven into the mountains.

Though of Christian descent, they appear to be generally quite devoid of religious faith, but their princes and nobles profess adherence to that of Islam. Their villages consist of a considerable number of houses and farms, scattered about the forests, whence they obtain the wax, honey, and furs which they bring to the European markets. Several of their tribes dwell at present on the right bank of the Kouban, and along the rivers Molka and Podkuma, but the majority have their homes on the left bank of the Kouban, and on the mountain ridge extending down to the shores of the Black Sea.

Their country is known by the names of the Great and Little Abassa; the latter borders on the frontiers of the Circassians to the west, and to the east on the Kouban, and their district is at present inhabited by five tribes, bearing the collective name of Ablikissek. They are—

1. The Klitsh, on the so-called Stone Bridge over the Kouban.

2. The Tramekt, renowned far and wide for their beautiful horses.

3. The Louh, in the valleys of the Lesser Indshik and the Kouban.

4. The Aflankt and Dudurquähe, between the Great Indshik and Uruss, touching to the north on the country inhabited by the Kubardines before their flight, and to the west on Dudurquähe.

5. The tribe Bibert.

The Great Abassa is inhabited by—

a. The Beshilbai, on the sources of the Great Indshik; they are governed by princes, and devote themselves more to cattle-breeding and the rearing of bees than to agriculture; and in spring and autumn they leave their homes for the low grounds on the Lesser Indshik, and roam about with their herds over extensive tracts.

b. The Tams, who dwell near the springs of the Uruss and the Great Laba.

c. The Kasilbeg, who live between the Greater and Lesser Laba, and whose houses and huts are carried up to the summits of the highest range.

d. The Barakoi, who are neighbours on the western side to the Kasilbeg, on the Highlands. From the barrenness of their soil and their consequent poverty, these people have to contend with great privations.

e. The Baghs live near the sources of the Laba and the Chodz.

f. The Tchagerai, or Tchegreh, occupy the country westward of the Baghs, which on the north-west borders on the dwellings of the Bestenians.

The following tribes reside in the so-called Transmontane Abassa, on the heights of the principal ranges, and on the south-

ern declivities that slope towards the Black Sea.

g. The Ubichs, neighbours of the Tcherkess Natugoi. They have good and well-cultivated vineyards on the mountain declivities.

h. The Midawy, or Medoweh, also called the Ashipsi; they dwell with the Dshigetita, south of the Tchagerai.

j. The Bsubeh, Bsub or Bsyb, neighbours of the former tribes, extend all over the heights, from the great mountain ridge to the Creek of Gagry, which constitutes the boundary of Circassia and Abchasia proper.

Abchasia extends from the highest peaks of the great range to the Black Sea, along the borders of Circassia, and is separated from Mingrelia by the river Ingur or Enguri. It is inhabited by the Abchases, the Tsebeldes, and the Abkhaves.

CHAPTER IV.

The Tatars of the Caucasus.—Their Appearance.—Occupations.—Religion.—Domestic Life.—The various Tribes.—Kumick Tatars.—Turcomans.—The ever-burning Fire on Cape Abcharan and elsewhere.—The Nogay Tatars.—Their Mode of Life.—The Suanes.—The Ossetes.—Singular Kind of Hospitality.—The Geographical Limits of their Territory.—The Dugores.—The Kists, etc.—The Lesghians.—Beauty and High Character of their Women, etc.

THE Tatars of these regions are found scattered about in various places, not much connected with one another, in the valleys of the Kouban, Baksan, Tchegem, Tcherek, and Argudan, all of which rise in the northerly branch of the Elbruz. The external aspect of these people does not immediately announce their Mongolian descent, as they are only distinguished

from the Circassians by a more compact figure, a darker skin, and smaller eyes. They live in pretty little cabins and houses built of pine logs, and are very intelligent and industrious. They manufacture gunpowder, carpets, cloth, and felt blankets; they get salt from the mountain salt-pits, cultivate tobacco, and brew beer and *særa*, which some travellers have thought as good as English porter; and their merchandize and manufactures are held in great repute all over the Caucasus, and obtain for them considerable influence. Their favourite article of food is horse flesh, which they regularly fatten for the purpose.

The more northerly dwelling places of these Tatars exhibit many traces of Christian architecture, but the Christian religion has entirely vanished from among them. They are devoted to the Islam faith, but are much addicted also to the interpreta-

tion of signs and omens, and are superstitious to excess. Polygamy is foreign to their habits, but their wives are secluded from the gaze of strangers, and treated with great consideration. To parents, also, respectful homage is paid; an undutiful son is punished by being put in a pillory in a public place, and should he not reform his conduct, he is expelled from his parents' house, and finally from the village.

The principle of retributive justice is fully recognized among these people; but they may be appeased by a solemn reconciliation, and their strict integrity renders treachery an almost unheard of occurrence among them.

The names of these tribes are:

1. The Karatchai, who live near the sources of the Kouban.

2. The Urusby, who are their neighbours to the west.

3. The Tchegem, who rear bees, and produce a great deal of honey, which is of a rather intoxicating quality, being made from the Azalea pontica.

4. The Balkar, or Bassianians, who inhabit cold inhospitable mountain valleys.

The Koumik Tatars, who inhabit the plains of the Sundcha, to the east of the northern cape of the Aksai, and of the Koissu or Sulak, as far as the Caspian. They are also to be found in the districts of the Kavanich Gubden and Dsengutei, in North Daghestan.

The Truchmenen, or Turkomans, occupy the whole length of the Caspian Sea coast, from Boniak to the borders of Shirvan or Daghestan, including the districts of Derbend or Kuba; the most influential of these tribes number as many as three hundred villages. Another tribe of this race inhabits the district of Baku, which

stretches to the extremity of Cape Abcharan, where it runs into the Caspian. On a pinnacle of this plateau, is maintained the far-famed ever-burning fire, which serves to the mariners of the Caspian as a beacon, and to those among them who are Guebers or Fire-Worshippers, also as an object of pious veneration. It is said to be kept up with a kind of gas; and these perpetual fires are maintained on the highest ridges of the districts of Tcheki and Rurki in Armenia, as well as far in the interior of Persia, and on the Steppes between the Caspian and the Sea of Asoph.

The Nogays, commonly numbered among the Tatar tribes, are a mixed people, tracing their origin from Nogai, a descendant of Dchengis-Khan, from whom, in the thirteenth century, they derived a high reputation.

After the conquest of Astrachan, in 1557,

they were subjugated by the Russians, from whose oppression they retreated to the banks of the Kouban. In 1778, they were defeated in a battle, as well as in various skirmishes, and reduced to the insignificant number who now pasture their numerous herds in the districts between the Kouban and the Kouma, and on the eastern Kouma steppes. They live under tents covered with felt, called kibitkas, and are an idle and rather savage race, but hospitable and easily managed, although somewhat too fond of an intoxicating beverage which they make from mares' milk. In their various wanderings, they make use of a two-wheeled carriage, called in the Caucasus an araba, a kind of locomotive that accompanies every movement with a screeching noise, which appears to be music to Nogay ears.

They say that no honest man ought to conceal his goings-out and comings-in; and

that only thieves need creep in and out softly.

Two only of the Nogay tribes live on the left bank of the river Kouban, in Circassia. These are the Maurensauls, who occupy the extensive fertile valleys extending along the Kouban, from the influx of the Laba; and the Mauzuras, or Kasai, between the Uruss Laba and Kouban.

The latter were, at the end of the last century, very numerous, amounting to at least eight thousand families, but they are at present reduced to a very small number.

The Suaneti, or, as they call themselves, Schnau, inhabit the heights of the Caucasus, south of the Tatars, east of Abchasia, north of Mingrelia, west of Imeretia, and of the heights of the Chenisqual, and of the Ingur, which flows through these mountains. Being surrounded by a steep mountain chain, they have hitherto preserved their

independence; they bow neither to prince, noble, nor foreign invader, and are certainly a very fine race, but it must be owned excessively dirty in their habits, and greatly addicted to robbery. They live in miserable cabins, without chimneys, or so much as a loophole to serve for a window, and in these are harboured, not only their families, but also their cattle, and certain treasures, such as gold and trinkets, which they obtain by open or secret theft, and ornament their wives therewith. Their garments are poor and scanty; they wear no headdress, seldom comb their hair, and frequently possess but one drinking cup for the whole family, but then, that serviceable utensil is a silver goblet.

These people are said to be of Christian origin, but not a vestige of Christian doctrine is to be found among them; and their mode of life would certainly not do any great credit to it if there were.

Their women, though they cover their faces with a red cloth, so that only one of their eyes is visible, are by no means remarkable for chastity, and generally have at least one favoured admirer.

Among the honest occupations of this tribe is that of obtaining lead and copper ores from their mountains, and also preparing their own gunpowder.

The Ossetes, or Ossetians, are a people of peculiar dialect and physiognomy; they have round full faces, fair hair, and blue eyes, and are of middle height, and strongly built. Their villages, though small, consist of stone houses with flat roofs, and they are protected by strong towers, in which, when the hamlet is attacked, the aged men, women, and children, can take refuge. These people are, like the rest, brave in battle, and willing to combine against a common enemy, but their system of morals is based

on a mere tissue of absurd and inconsistent traditional usages. A guest, as long as he remains under their roof, is watched over with the utmost solicitude, and the host would certainly defend him at the peril of his own life against any attack; but scarcely has the stranger quitted the abode that afforded him such hospitable shelter, than the host, his former protector, sets out to follow and plunder or even murder him, and that sometimes before he has got beyond the precincts of the village.

The religion of the Ossetians is a compound of Christian and pagan practices, and they also worship a prophet Elias, in caves which are the abodes of astrologers and soothsayers, here held in great veneration.

Agricultural pursuits would in this country require considerable labour, on account of the sterility of the soil, and the inha-

bitants therefore in general prefer cattle breeding; but they grow their own tobacco, and brew a malt liquor of excellent quality.

If we regard the Terek valley as the boundary between the Eastern and Western Caucasus, the Ossete territory will be the south-eastern part of its western half. On the north their country is bounded by the Kabarda, and on the west and south-west the Tatars and Imeretians are their neighbours. They extend along the southern declivities of the Caucasus, and thence between Imeretia and the Aragvi into Georgia Proper, along the Imeretian chalk cliffs, by the sources of the Reoni, and eastward to the Didi-Liachvi, Patara Liachvi, Medchuda, Kssami, and Aragvi, where they are known under the name of Dvaletti.

The most important branches of this tribe are the Dschmuri and Gudamaqua, who live on the banks of a considerable

mountain river of the same name; and the Chewaurethi, whose territory is on the Aragvi. The Ossetians, north of the Dvaletti, occupy the banks of the rivers Uruch, Durdar, Aredon, Frag, and Gualdon, down to the Terek, which receives these rivers.

The most influential Ossete tribes found near the sources of the Terek, are the Dugores, who inhabit the rugged mineral ridges along the Uruch; they are governed by princes of the venerated Circassian families, Badi-lathé and Tcherkessaté. The Schimi-Kurtauli, Walagiri, Phaikomé, and lastly, the Tagauri, inhabit the Kasbeck.

6. The Medzeghee or Kists, are often called Tchetchenzes, from the name of their most influential tribe. They possess the virtues and qualities peculiar to the Circassian races, and especially a most enthusiastic love of freedom and independence, submitting with the utmost reluctance to a foreign

yoke, and watching with keen vigilance every opportunity of throwing it off.

Their villages consist of flat-roofed stone houses, protected by walls and towers, capable of resisting an energetic attack. Some of these tribes possess an abundance of cattle and corn, but they are nevertheless very frugal in their mode of living.

They usually confine themselves to the district bordered on the west by the Terek (in the part where it flows northward), on the east by the Aksai and Engure, and bounded on the north by the Lesser Kabarda and Sundcha, and to the south by the Snowy Mountains.

The most influential tribes among them are:—

1. The Ingushes, or Galgai, who reside on the Kumbolei, and in the plains between the latter and the banks of the Assai.

2. The Kists, north-west of the Ingushes, and extending to the Argun.

3. The Karabulaks, from the Zarthan to the Argun; and, lastly,

4. The Tchetchenzes, who are found along the banks of the Argun, the Aksai, and the Sundcha. Several branches of this tribe inhabit the Snowy Mountain ridges, and of these the principal are:—

a. The Tchavi, from the Aragvi to the springs of the Yori.

b. The Tuschi, found to the east of the latter, on the Alzani.

The Lesghians are composed of many different tribes, who have been settled for ages in the almost inaccessible heights, and in the valleys and hollows encircled by arms of the Caucasian mountain ridges, which extend from north to south-east. Even on the East, their country is separated from the Caspian and from Daghestan by a mountain chain stretching from north to south. Several of these tribes have been

compelled to succumb to the encroachments of the enemy, though they are as manly in character, as fond of independence, and as ready to do battle in defence of it, as any other of the Caucasian races. Though in general their manners resemble those of the Circassians, their habits are more predatory and violent, and they are sterner observers of the law of retribution.

Their villages (auls) resemble those of the Kists, the houses being flat and stone-roofed, but of a larger size, and so well fortified, that they may certainly boast of each man's house being his castle. Some of the highlanders among them live in caves dug in the rock, or huts wedged in between the cliffs. The Lesghian women are the finest in the Caucasus, and, besides their beauty, are famed for their domestic habits and their skill in knitting and weaving. Nor are their virtues confined to the do-

mestic circle; for, when a battle is being fought, they fly to the field to encourage the efforts of their countrymen, to reanimate the failing and exhausted, and bring needful succour to the wounded; and they themselves have been known to commit suicide on the field of a lost battle, rather than submit to be taken by the enemy. The whole of these Lesghian races are devoted followers of Islam.

The soil of the Lesghian territory is very various in different parts; in some it is fertile, yielding abundant return for the light labour bestowed upon it; in others, the severest toil is required to obtain a subsistence from it, as an artificial soil has to be spread over the hard naked surface of the rock. But whenever this is the case, the people work with indefatigable perseverance upon it, and often, by their industry, convert dreary and barren uplands into charming plateaux.

The Lesghians are divided, according to their several dialects, into four distinct tribes; namely, the Avares, the Akushas, the Kasikoumiks, and the Kuraghs.

The territory of the Avares borders westward on the Aksai, to the north on the promontory of the Aksai and Enderi, to the east on the Koissu, and to the south extending over the chief mountain range on the Samura.

The most influential tribes among these Avares are, the Andi, the Gambi, the Koissubou, the Ansaldi, the Richei, the Kialar, the Borotsi, the Khitadler, the Unso, the Dido, the Karak, and Kheserti.

The Akusha district borders westward on the Koissu, to the north and east on the Tartar tribes of Kasanick Gubden and Dsengutei, and to the south on the sources of the Ossen. Their principal tribes are

the Ssalata, the Tarkow, and the Brotherhood of Dsaro.

The Kasimouks live between the upper part of the Koissu on their west, and the Kaitach range and Tabasseran on their east; and have the Akushas on the north, and the Turpi ridge and its southern dependencies on the south. The most influential tribes among them are those of Achim, Karakaitah, Tabasseran, Kasikoumick, and the Sussanet of Yelissim; the Brotherhood of Dsaro, with the Dsaro, Belakan, Taly Dsinick, Mirchach, and several smaller tribes, including the Rubeshti, who have the reputation of being the best armourers in the Caucasus; and lastly, the Kurragh, who inhabit the valley of the Kour, towards Baku.

To give a correct statement of the numbers of the various races and tribes who inhabit the Caucasus, would be a task still

more difficult than that of enumerating their names, and describing the position of the almost inaccessible districts they inhabit.

The following table, therefore, though drawn up from the most authentic statistical documents, is only given as an approximate calculation, which it must be left to a future time to rectify.

I. TSCHERKESS OR ADIGES.

1. In the Great Kabardas . . .	20,000
2. In the Lesser Kabardas . . .	8,000
3. Kabardas, who have taken refuge on the banks of the Indshik and the Uruss	15,000
4. Bestenians	25,000
5. Mochothi	8,000
6. Tenigoi, with the Jegorokes, Ademi, and Hattuquähe	18,000
7. Bsedooks	20,000
8. Abasechs	180,000
9. Shapsooks	210,000
10. Natugoi with the Shané and Thegakeh	50,000
Total of the Tscherkess . .	554,000

II. ABASSIANS.

A. In Lesser Abassa—

1. Klitch . . .	5,000	
2. Tramkt . . .	4,000	
3. Louh . . .	4,000	
4. Asslankt . . .	10,000	
5. Dudurquähe . .	7,000	
6. Bibert . . .	10,000	
	———	40,000

B. In Great Abassa; Cismontane part—

1. Beshilbai . .	8,000	
2. Tam . . .	3,000	
3. Kasilbeg . . .	1,000	
4. Barakei . . .	6,000	
5. Bagh . . .	4,000	
6. Tshagerai . .	5,000	
	———	27,000

C. In the Transmontane part of the Great Abassa—

7. Ubich . . .	6,000	
8. Midawi . . .	15,000	
9. Bsubeh . . .	19,000	
	———	40,000

D. In Abchasia—

1. Abchasia . . .	10,000	
2. Tsebalden . .	15,000	
3. Abkhanen . .	10,000	
	———	35,000
Total of Abassians . . .		142,000

III. TARTARS.	
1. In chief mountain range . .	20,000
2. Kamück Tartars . . .	60,000
3. Turkomans	70,000
4. Nogai in Circassia . . .	16,000
Total of Tartars . . .	166,000
IV. SUANES, about	40,000
V. OSSETIANS.	
1. Dwaleshi	20,000
2. The total of other tribes . .	40,000
Total of Ossetes . . .	60,000
VI. MIDZIGHEES, namely, the smaller tribes included in the chief tribes.	
1. Ingusches	60,000
2. Kists	35,000
3. Karabulaks	30,000
4. Tchetchenzes	70,000
Total of Midzighees . .	195,000
VII. LESGHIANS, according to their chief tribes.	
1. Awares	75,000
2. Akuscha	45,000
3. Kasimüks	126,000
4. Kuragh	30,000
Total of Lesghians . . .	276,000
Making the grand total of the whole population	1,433,000

The southern declivities of the Caucasus, of which several imposing branches stretch as far as Mount Ararat, shelve, on the whole, more gently downward, and are less precipitous than the northern.

The rich vegetation of this part of the Caucasian chain renders it beautiful beyond description, and the charm of the magnificent scenery, produced by this luxuriant growth of all kinds of plants, is heightened by an equable, salubrious, and delightful climate. An excellent wine is made here from grapes, the cultivation of which gives the people no trouble whatsoever, as they grow quite wild and often with a gigantic vigour, that makes even the vines of Italy seem poor in comparison,—twining their wreathed branches round the largest trees, and hanging their glowing fruit even on the topmost boughs. The wine made from them is kept in bags of buffalo or sheep-

skin, which have been previously saturated with naptha.

Nearly all the people inhabiting this part of the Caucasus are of Georgian origin, and belong to the Greek Church.

This region is divided into three provinces or districts, all extending northward to the Snowy Mountains.

1. Mingrelia in the west, between the rivers Ingur, Tychemis-quali, Rioni, and the Black Sea.

2. Imeritia, lying eastward of Mingrelia, whose people are in much the same condition as their western neighbours.

3. Georgia Proper, extending eastward to the Tcheki and Rurki.

The Georgians are considered as the finest race in the Caucasus next to the Circassians, to whom they are inferior in grace of deportment, but they are not, like the Circassians, animated by a noble passion

for liberty and independence. The women endeavour to heighten their beauty by the use of paint, in which certainly they are not very successful; and they also, with the same view, overload their dresses with gaudy ornaments.

The population of Georgia, Imeritia and Mingrelia is very scanty, and many rich woodlands and beautiful valleys have been entirely depopulated by the sanguinary wars that have raged in the country, and by the iron despotism that still continues to weigh on and impoverish it.

CHAPTER V.

THE WARS OF THE CAUCASUS.

The Caucasus in Ancient Times.—Remains of a great Wall across the Mountains.—A glance at the Ancient History of Georgia.—Russian Progress from the time of Peter the Great.—Under the Empress Catherine.—First Settlement of the Cossacks.—Russian Intrigues in the Kabarda.—Great number of Forts built in and near theCaucasus.

THE amount of knowledge of the Caucasus possessed by the ancients, and the degree of importance which these regions held in their estimation, we have now little means of ascertaining, as history and even tradition are silent on these points. But we are led to infer that they must have attached considerable value to it, from the fact of a prodigious wall having been built at some remote period, and the remains of

which are still to be seen, extending along various tracts of the great mountain chain, from Derbent, on the shores of the Caspian Sea, to the pass of Dariel.

This wall is attributed to Alexander the Great, who is said to have reigned over the mountaineers, under the name of Iskandeer.

There is another story, too, of a certain Georgian king, residing in an ancient fortress, built on the southern declivities of the Caucasus one hundred and twenty years before Christ, and holding sway over a powerful and flourishing people, until the Scythians (Chazardes) came from the north to wage war upon him. In consequence of these wars, the eastern district fell under Persian rule, and the western under that of the Greeks, who exercised authority in the country till the fall of the Pontic king Mithridates, after which it yielded to the mighty sceptre of Rome.

Towards the end of the tenth century, we find both districts reunited under the Georgian queen Tamar, in whose reign they became a powerful kingdom; and, as the sway of this queen extended over many of the mountain tribes, she compelled them to adopt the Christian religion, which had been promulgated in Georgia as early as the fourth century.

This prosperous Georgian kingdom was, however, ravaged and laid waste by Timour, in the thirteenth century; and so complete was the desolation, that nearly two hundred years afterwards it had not recovered from it, when Alexander the First, by dividing it among his three sons, made it an object of contention to Turkey, Persia, and Russia, and led to long dynastic warfare concerning it, each of those powers endeavouring to gain the advantage over the other.

The Persians advancing from the Caspian, and the Turks from the Black Sea, came here into collision, and vied with each other in effecting the ruin of the country, which each regarded as the enemy's territory; while they exercised by turns a fluctuating authority over the subjugated people of Daghestan, and the Turks occasionally also over the Black Sea coast, and the districts at the mouth of the Kouban.

In 1553, the Russians overran Kasan; and two years afterwards the Circassian princess of Beschtan, being hard pressed by the Tartars, had to emigrate to the Kabarda, and applied to Russia for protection. It was given; and, in 1557, the Russians garrisoned Astrachan, and advancing to the mouths of the rivers Terek and Koissu, gained, for the first time, a footing on Caucasian soil.

In 1568, they built the fortress of Terki, on the Terek; and within a year afterwards, their name had spread such terror among the mountaineers, that the Georgians, too, sought their protection.

The Russian garrisons on the Terek were, however, viewed with such displeasure by Sultan Selim, that, in 1570, he caused them to evacuate Terki; but by 1574 they had retaken, enlarged, and strengthened it; and then when they had defeated the Shamkul of Tarku, they garrisoned that place as well as Enderi, and built the fortress of Koissu.

Sultan Selim now became so much alarmed at the Russian successes, that he sent an army of three thousand men, under Achmet the First, to assist the people of Daghestan against them; and these combined forces compelled the Russians to retreat.

In 1587, Alexander, the second King of Kachetia, placed himself under Russian protection; and in the course of the following year, Russia, desirous of possessing a legal—or apparently legal—claim to her conquests, concluded with Persia a treaty of alliance, in which she asserted her right to invade and appropriate the country about the Terek, as well as Tarku, Derbent, Baku, and Georgia, an extent of aim which she has even yet but imperfectly attained.

The year 1594 presented favourable prospects to the Russians. The King of Georgia, in offering his submission to their ambassador, had made the most flattering declarations of his earnest desire to promote their objects in the Caucasus; and through his intervention treaties had been concluded by them with several of the mountain tribes, between his territory and theirs.

After this, the Koumik Tatars and the people of Daghestan were defeated in battle; and Russian influence appeared now to be firmly established, and Russian authority to reign supreme.

Under this supposition, and relying too much on a success that was really somewhat ephemeral, the Russians were guilty of many acts of imprudence and tyranny, for which they had afterwards to suffer the punishment. In 1604 and the following years, the Daghestan people waged a terrible and exterminating warfare on the invading army, which they fairly annihilated; so that for a long time the Russians lost all those means of communication, and all the influence over the people and countries of the Caucasus, which they had acquired under so many difficulties, and with such unspeakable sacrifices.

Though several tribes of the Kabarda

still remained under Russian rule, and though in 1614 several princes of the Lesser Kabarda swore, both verbally and in writing, allegiance to Russia, it was evident that her influence over them was little more than nominal.

During the interval between this time and that of Peter the Great, no important achievement of the Russians is recorded, though they showed their intention of persevering in their efforts to consolidate their power, by fortifying Tarki in European style. In 1648, the King of Imeretia offered his submission, and two years afterwards took the oath of allegiance to Russia for himself and his heirs: a compact, nevertheless, which could only be considered binding in time of peace, as might be easily shown from the state of the people at that period, and even at the present day.

With the appearance of Peter the Great,

however, the aspect of Russian affairs in the Caucasus underwent a marked change. The Turks had retaken Tamar and built Anapa; and, while their possession of the coasts of Abchasia brought them into intimate contact with the mountaineers, and that of Poti and Redout Kaleh gave them great power over Mingrelia and Imeretia, they had also taken Achaltzik.

The tribes of Daghestan, on the other hand, taking advantage of the weakness of Persia, declared themselves independent, as did also the khans of Kuba, Derbent, Baku, Shemacha, Shervan, Sheki, Gandga, Karabagh, Erivan, and Nachitchevan.

The Lesghians, hitherto almost unknown, now began to rise, and in 1714 they made an onslaught upon Georgia, and afterwards frequently repeated their attacks.

In order to counteract the influence gained by the Sultan of the Avares, the

Utsmai of Karakaitach, the Kadi of Tabesseran, and the Sultan of the Kasemücks, the keen perceptions of Peter the Great suggested the possibility of surprising them by an energetic movement, for which a plausible excuse had been afforded by the assassination of three hundred Russian merchants.

Peter embarked in 1722, in Astrachan, with a large force—some historians say a hundred thousand men—and proclaiming that he had undertaken this expedition to assist Persia against the Kasikoumucks and Lesghians, he landed at Tarku, and soon conquered and garrisoned the coast as far as Derbent.

In 1723 Persia made over to Peter, Daghestan, Shirvan, Gilan, Masanderan, and Astrabad; and in the treaty of peace entered into with Turkey, he stipulated for the confluence of the Avares and the Kur,

as the centre of the territory dividing the frontiers of Russia, Persia, and Turkey.

In the following year the warriors of Daghestan attempted the re-capture of Tarku; but they failed, and had to submit to Peter, who then began to build the forts of Svatoikrest on the Koissu, and Kislyar on the Terek, demolishing at the same time the fortifications of Terki, the town which he had given up in 1728.

The plans of Peter, however, though clearly laid down in his will, were in a great measure frustrated by his death; and the Russian successes in the Caucasus were checked by Shah Nadir, who, in 1735, carried his forces triumphantly through Persia, defeated the Turks at Kars, and, although the Lesghians took some of his guns at Kumick, succeeded in forcing the Russians to retreat beyond the Terek.

The Turks, too, were equally successful

against the Empress Anna, and in 1739 forced her to evacuate the Kabarda. Catherine II, however, who entered fully into the spirit of Peter's designs, began to prosecute them with circumspection and assiduity. A prince of the Kabarda having become a convert to the Greek Church, the Russian empress pretended that, for his protection, it was necessary to fortify Mosdok on the Terek; this was done in 1763, and, in order to secure this fortress, the empress, in 1771, established a military *cordon*, consisting of the subjugated Greben Cossacks, who were compelled to settle on and guard the left bank of the Terek, from Kislyar upwards; while, to the Wolga Cossacks, was entrusted the charge of guarding the line between the latter place and Mosdock, so that the progress of the Russian arms was rendered very secure.

It was in the fifteenth century that

this tribe of bold adventurers, called Cossacks, rose into notice. They occupied the steppes between the Wolga and the Don, and in the course of time extended themselves over the coasts of the Sea of Asoph and the banks of the Dneiper; nominally acknowledging Russian supremacy, but making very light of it whenever they had an opportunity. The first settlement of the Cossacks on the Don was called Tcherkask, and was founded by their Hetman, under Ivan Vasiliewitch; after this event the Cossacks became more tractable, though they revolted nevertheless under Tzar Alexei Michaelowitch, whose reign, and that of his successor, were disturbed by the attempts of the Cossacks to recover their independence.

Their last and most determined rebellion took place in the reign of Catherine II, under their chief Pugatchef, and in this

last effort they exhausted their power of opposition to the Russian rule.

The Cossacks are now exempt from every tax, trained to military service, and divided into regiments occupying military colonies, the inhabitants of which are ranked in four classes, namely:—

1. Male children, from their birth to their sixteenth year.

2. Youths from the sixteenth to the twentieth.

3. Men from the age of twenty to sixty, during the whole of which period they have to serve alternately six years in the field and six years in the colony.

4. Those who have attained the age of sixty and upwards.

The supreme chief of all the Cossacks is the grand duke, the heir to the throne.

The Cossacks who line the roads live in stanitzas, that is, entrenched villages,

secured by palisades and surrounded by huts raised on high poles for sentries, and called Vashkas, from which the alarm can be sounded on the suspected approach of an enemy. As the Cossacks are good horsemen, and capable of much endurance, they have often proved of great service to the Russians in combating the mountaineers.

In 1771 instructions were issued by the government concerning the means to be pursued to gain the affections of the people of the Kabarda. Deserters from that country, and all who could be induced to adopt the doctrines of the Greek Church, were to be rewarded with rich gifts and money; but on princes and nobles willing to enlist in the Russian military service, landed property was to be bestowed, in addition to gold and honours in abundance. The scheme was, nevertheless, not very successful at first, for the Kabardines raised an

army of twenty-five thousand men, with which they defeated General Medern in 1772.

In the meantime the rest of the Caucasus was in a very disturbed state. At the death of Nadir Shah, the whole of Daghestan, Shirvan, Karabagh, Gandya, Erivan, and Nachitchevan, revolted successfully against the invaders; and Heraklias, of Georgia, also thought the moment favourable for securing the former dependencies of his country, and took the Leghians into pay to aid his designs on Gandya, Karabagh, Erivan, and Nachitchevan. But the people of these districts combined with the sultan of the Avares and the Turks to attack Heraklius; and Catherine, availing herself of this circumstance, sent a large army under general Todleben—the first Russian army which had traversed the Kabarda and the Pass of Dariel—to assist

Heraklius against his enemies. The Turks were then defeated in 1771 at Kutais and Bagdadshik, after which they concluded a treaty of peace, and it was then settled that the Kabarda should be dependent on Russia.

In 1775 Russia established in the Terek country several forts, the most remarkable of which were Jekaterinograd on the Molka, Georgievisk on the Podkouma, and Stavropol on the Alshile. Within three years afterwards this line of fortifications was continued to Moskossk and Dousk, and placed under the guardianship of Wolga Cossacks. The Kouban Cossacks were thus induced to claim Russian protection, and the Kouban became the western, the Molka and Terek the eastern frontier of the Russian territory.

Another attempt was made in 1779 to recover the independence of the Kabarda,

and, though it proved abortive, it induced the Russians to construct the formidable fortress of Kostantinogovsk. Four years afterwards Heraklius II, of Georgia, tendered his submission to the Russians; and then, in order to secure the communication with Georgia, they constructed the fort of Vladikavkas, at the entrance of the Terek valley.

CHAPTER VI.

The Mission of Sheik Manzur.—His success in agitation.—The Russians again victorious.—The Sheik taken prisoner.—Various warlike movements.—The Russian frontier extended.—The Will of the King of Georgia.—Russia takes possession of the Country.—Prince Zizianoff assassinated.—More Fortresses built.—Assassination of the Russian Ally by his own Son.—The Trans-Caucasian Provinces.—The Tartar General Yermoloff.—Daring Exploits on both sides.—Arslan Bey.—Kasimullah.

To arrest the progress of Russia, by other means than by superiority in warlike operations, the Turks now had recourse to religious agitation, and a clever fanatic, Sheik Manzur, was, in 1785, sent to proselytize the Caucasians. He found among them great apathy with respect to the doctrines of Islam; but taking advantage of their

intense hatred of their Christian invaders, he addressed enthusiastic appeals to their patriotism, and having thus succeeded in exciting a feeling in favour of the Turks, in their political character, as enemies of the Russians, he afterwards effected his purpose of gaining them over to their religion.

This Sheik Manzur was, in his personal qualifications, singularly well adapted to the task he had undertaken. Young, graceful, of majestic figure, and beautiful features, of daring valour in presence of the enemy, and gifted with captivating eloquence; he was also frugal in the midst of plenty, living almost wholly on milk and bread, yet lavishly charitable, and the fame of his sanctity spread at once like wildfire among the Caucasians. He constantly preached to them the necessity of unity and combined action; and, in 1785, he had acquired such influence, that he began to

alarm the Russians in their forts, by cutting off their supplies and reinforcements.

The standard of rebellion being now fairly raised, he, in 1788, broke through the Russian lines, and attacked Naur; and though unable to master the garrison, for the very women fought on the walls with heroic desperation, he acquired by this bold attempt a still more powerful influence over his Caucasian followers.

War had, meanwhile, again broken out between the Russians and the Turks, who, uniting their forces with those of the Circassians, marched towards the Kouban, and engaged General Bulkakoff; but he defeated them, and drove them back to Anapa.

In 1791, Anapa was captured by the Russians, and Sheik Manzur, being taken prisoner, was sent to end his days in miserable captivity at the fort of Schlusselbourg.

After this defeat, the Turks were very glad to come to terms with Russia, and in the treaty concluded at Jasi, they consented to resign the protectorate over Mingrelia, Imeretia, and Georgia, and promised that the Pacha of Achalzik should discontinue his traffic in slaves, by which, as the Russians were aware, his influence over the Lesghians would necessarily be curtailed.

Russia now spared neither labour nor expense in consolidating her interest in Daghestan, and in the mountains. She established commercial depôts along the Terek, constructed roads through the country, and, in 1786, took the Shamkal of Tarku and the Sultan of the Avares into her pay.

Since the war of 1793, the Khans of Baku and Derbent also had continued in the receipt of Russian gold; and in 1794, their lines of fortifications were extended

from the fort of Ust Labrusk to Georgievsk and to the Nèdre-mansh Redout, near which were built the forts of Protschoi, Okop, Gregoriopolst, and Kaukask.

But the progress of the Russians was not uncontested. Aga Mohamed, a relative of Shah Nadir, now fell with fire and sword on the invaders, and endeavoured to restore the former state of things; but General Zukoff advanced with his forces from Kisliar, and besieged and took Derbent, Baku, Kesba, Tcheki, Shirvan, and Karabagh, which were garrisoned by the Russians till the death of Catherine.

The King of Georgia, George the Thirteenth, becoming about this time greatly embarrassed, by the feuds and hostility of the Lesghians, solicited the assistance of Russia, which was immediately granted; and since, by means of this help, he was successful, his gratitude led to an event of

importance, that bid fair to realise some of the ambitious dreams of Peter and Catherine, for the extension of Russian influence. George the Thirteenth, namely, made over his empire by will to Russia; and in consequence of this will, when his death occurred in 1800, she immediately assumed the government, and in the following year took possession of the country, proclaiming Tiflis the capital of the districts of Gori-Lori, Dusheti, Thetavi, and Signack.

Having now obtained a footing on the other side of the Caucasus, Russia set to work in good earnest, to accomplish the difficult task she had undertaken; and though unable to communicate with her own dominions through any other channel than that of one dangerous mountain pass, she persevered in forcing her way onwards through all obstacles. The dangers she incurred, however, it must be admitted, were

not to be compared to those which the English had to brave in their Indian wars.

The first governor of Georgia, General Knorring, organized the system by which Russia proposed to govern the newly acquired country. He was succeeded, in 1803, by Prince Zizianoff, who, as a far-sighted politician, at once became aware of the necessity of securing the territory so recently gained, by extension of the frontier; and not being able just then to attack the Turks, he directed his movements towards the Caspian instead of the Black Sea, and in 1804, seized Gandya, under the pretext that it was formerly a dependency of Georgia, and now belonged to Russia by right of inheritance. He annexed it, therefore, to the other territory, under the name of Elizabethspol, and this act created so great a panic, that the people of Shirvan, Baku, Derbent, Karakaitach, and even the

Sultan of the Avares, once more offered their submission to Russia.

Zizianoff, now making Tiflis the basis of his operations against the Lesghians of Belokan and Dsara, soon subdued them, and then marched against Imeretia under the pretext of putting down disturbances there; thence he undertook, during the same year, an expedition against Erivan; but this proved unsuccessful, from what was called the treachery of the tribes before mentioned, who seized the first opportunity of revolting against Russian supremacy.

The Russian general believing this revolt to have been instigated by Turkish intrigues, now endeavoured, in his turn, to excite disturbances in Mingrelia and Imeretia, with a view of severing all connexion between them and the Turks; and in the meanwhile, with the assistance of Kelim

Bey, Prince of Abchasia, he suppressed the insurrection in his own territory. In 1805 he even succeeded in incorporating Karabagh, and occupying Tcheki, Nuchi, and Shirsheh; but while in the act of passing the gate of Baku in triumph, he was suddenly assassinated.

Russian forces immediately advanced from the Terek, made themselves masters of Derbent as well as of Baku, and, after a sanguinary struggle, they avenged their general's death by horrible atrocities.

The Turks, now strengthened by an alliance with the Circassians and the Tchetchenzes, declared war against Russia; but the Russians, though surrounded by difficulties and suffering great hardships, were nevertheless victorious.

General Gudowitch attacked and took Anapa by sea, overpowered the Circassians on the Kouban, and punished the Tchet-

chenzes by confiscation of the fort Khan Kalé, which formed also a convenient and acceptable addition to the Russian line of fortifications.

By force or stratagem, therefore, the Russians had succeeded in establishing, between 1798 and 1803, eight fortresses on the Upper Molka, and along the Podkouma to the Kouban; to these, in the course of one year more, they added six others. In 1805, Cossacks from Little Russia were introduced to guard the Ust, Labinst, and Kaukask; and though in 1807 the armistice of Uzun-Kilissa was concluded, in 1809 hostilities were resumed with unwarranted ferocity, and the Prince of Imeretia and his family were taken prisoners and confined in Tiflis, which they were not suffered to leave again.

Just at this time the Russian ally, Kelim Bey, was assassinated by his own son, Ars-

lan Bey, who was attached to the Turkish party; and as the Abchasians on the occurrence of this event made some anti-Russian demonstrations, a pretext was afforded to Russia for occupying Sachum-Kaleh. This she did in 1810, and secured thereby her first footing on the east coast of the Black Sea.

In 1813 the Russians concluded, on terms very favourable to themselves, the peace of Gulistan; the stipulations of which, besides offering great immediate advantages to Russia, contained the germ of future acquisitions of territory as well as of fresh pretences for aggression.

Russia was to obtain by this treaty all the southern declivities of Caucasus, as far as to the Attaghez range bordering on the Araxes, on the Persian side; and on that of Persia, as far as the Achalzik.

Trans-Caucasia, therefore, consisted at

this time of Georgia, with the provinces of Kachetia, Karthli, Somchiti, and Elizabethspol.

Secondly, of the provinces of Imeretia, Mingrelia, Abchasia, and Gurieb; all of which, except Imeretia, were nominally governed by their own princes.

Thirdly, of the provinces Tcheki, Shirvan, and Karabagh, on the lower Kour valley, still under their old khans.

Fourthly, of the districts on the coast of the Caspian Sea, namely, Baku, Derbent, and Kuba, whose khans had been exiled.

Russia had made all these acquisitions in the short space of thirteen years, during which she had been developing her energies with astonishing rapidity, though apparently without attracting the notice of the Western Powers. As Turkey was still in possession of the Circassian coast, it was not likely that Russia would allow the

peace to be of long duration; she would probably, it was thought, regard it merely as affording a favourable opportunity of preparation for the renewal of hostilities, for which, indeed, occasion was daily given by the Circassians, assisted by the Turks, attacking and plundering the Russian lines.

The Kabardines, though compelled to submit to the protectorate of the Russians, embraced every opportunity of giving vent to the hatred they bore them; and the Tchetchenzes were no less hostilely disposed, but burst forth continually from their inaccessible mountain retreats, to spread terror and death through the lines of the invader.

The hostility manifested against the Russians on their first appearance in the Caucasus, increased in the minds of the mountaineers with every Russian conquest;

and, had their resistance been properly organized, and their strength augmented by combination and union under one leader, they would doubtless have succeeded in annihilating the legions of their northern foe. The policy of the Russians in exiling the khans, under the idea that the people would then be more easily subjected to the laws and reconciled to the customs of their new rulers, had by no means the desired effect; but, on the contrary, rendered them still more distrustful of, and exasperated against their new rulers. The beys or princes, while ostensibly acknowledging the Russian protectorate, were really intriguing against a complete subjection to it; and their dangerous opposition was encouraged by the Lesghians, amongst whom the Avares, Karakaitachs, Kasikoumicks, Azooks, and Dsaro-Belokans, were the most formidable foes to Russia: the khans of

Tabasseran and Kuragh alone had cordially espoused her cause.

The Mahometan Tartars of the provinces taken in the last war from Persia, were naturally more inclined to obey the dictates of their own khans than those of Russian officials, and therefore needed to be carefully watched. Yermoloff, their commander, however, did his best to uphold the czar's interest, by constructing new lines of fortification and destroying others which had proved useless; and he succeeded in obtaining for the Russians, for the first time, a secure footing on the Sundshah, by the forts Pregradnoi-stan, Usmalchan, Gurt, Nasran, and especially Gras-naja, which commanded the defile of Khan-kaleh.

Near Enderi, on the outlet of the Koissu, in the plains of Tarku, he erected the fort of Wnesnapjaja, which afforded an efficient defence against the Khankalat of Tarku,

as well as against the slave trade of Enderi; for the Lesghians and Tchetchenzes, engaged in this traffic, were in the habit of meeting at that place to transact their business and arrange their movements. Yermoloff also connected Wnesnapjaga by a line of forts with Grosnaja, constructed roads, cut down forests, and kept, by his moving columns, a vigilant superintendence over the subjugated Tchetchenzes, living within the districts surrounded by the above-mentioned forts.

The military road through the pass of Dariel, which had hitherto led from Mosdok to Vladikavkas, was now carried to Jekaterinograd, on the left bank of the Terek, and protected by a line of forts at the entrances of the valleys Uruch, Boksan, Tchegem, and Tcherek.

The Circassians, whose invasions had become more and more dangerous, were kept

in check by forts erected on the left bank of the Kouban, and extending for a considerable distance into their territory.

Fort Protshnoi-Okop now became the centre of the Russian military operations, and the Chernomorski Cossacks stationed along the Kouban, from the Ust-labinsk downwards, were placed under the orders of the general commanding in the Caucasus, who commenced a cruel guerilla warfare against the mountaineers; burning their villages and cornfields, capturing their flocks, and endeavouring to exterminate them by all the scourges of war. They nevertheless resisted his advances, fought step by step for their native soil, and to the Russian superiority of numerical force opposed that of the most determined and desperate valour.

Of the feats of daring performed by the Russians during this war, several deserve to be mentioned. The capture of Paraul,

the residence of the Khans of the Avares, for instance, in 1818; that of the Akucha in 1820; and the siege and occupation of Kuragh, by which various powerful tribes were reduced to subjection. The defeat of Sarkhai, Khan of the Kassemuk d'heer Khorey, in the same year, was of great importance to Daghestan, and for some time served to check the attempts of the Lesghians to regain their liberty.

In this battle there were twelve hundred men killed, and the Russians took six hundred prisoners, besides capturing the nine celebrated guns which the Lesghians had taken from Shah Nadir, and a great quantity of other munitions of war.

Sarkhai Khan now took refuge with the Khan of Kirvan, and then fled with him and the Khan of Karabagh to Persia; and their flight afforded Russia a welcome opportunity and pretext for placing the con-

quered districts under her own governor. This plan she also pursued with the Khanate of Tcheki, after the death of the khan. In the meanwhile the Russians had frequent skirmishes with the western tribes, in which both parties met with serious discomfiture and damage.

Arslan Bey, while advancing his pretensions to the throne of Abchasia (in 1821), gave battle to the Russians near Kodor; but though in command of a force numerically stronger than that of the enemy, he suffered a defeat. He renewed his efforts for the delivery of Abchasia from the foreign yoke in 1824, but this attempt also proved unsuccessful and terminated his career. The Russians continued to gain ground, though slowly, and they had to purchase this slow progress by almost incredible sacrifices.

All at once a fanatic Mussulman, named

Kasimullah, made his appearance on the theatre of war at the head of a large body of the mountaineers, with whom he began to wage war to the knife against the Russians. With the exploits of this man begins a new era of the Caucasian wars, especially in the eastern part of the chain, whose inhabitants, unlike the western aborigines, were faithful and devoted followers of Islam.

For centuries past the teachers and priests of the Mahometan doctrines had found access to the mountain homes of the Lesghians and Tchetchenzes, and exercised great influence over them; while the races of the Western Caucasus had remained indifferent and in great measure dead to every form of religion.

Murshid Hadji Ismael Effendi, a man in high repute for piety and learning, acquired under the celebrated Halidshah,

Shah of Bagdad, had drawn a great number of disciples and followers after him to the village of Kurlomir, in Shirvan, where he had established a school for preachers; and the chief purpose of his teaching was to exhort the people to united action in the pursuit and destruction of the invading unbelievers. This astute politician knew full well, that the success of the mountaineers in defending their country against the well trained and strictly disciplined armies of Russia, depended entirely on their union and co-operation. Without this co-operation the Caucasus must inevitably become an easy prey to the invader.

To induce all the Caucasian hordes to rally round the banner of the prophet, was a task of no little difficulty; for it was necessary to contend against the petty mutual jealousies of the different tribes, as well as against their low standard of morality,

and their lack of knowledge, and of any property or stake in the country beyond that of their miserable hovels.

By steadfast perseverance, however, and by working on their passions when they were either suffering under reverses or buoyed up with triumph by success, he at last effected his purpose of enlisting the sympathies of the different tribes in the common cause, and inducing them to participate in the struggle against the common enemy. His tactics were of so bold a character, that he often succeeded in surprising the Russians and carrying dismay into their lines.

One of his disciples, Mohammed Effendi, animated by the enthusiasm of his preceptor, returned to his native country to officiate as a religious teacher for the districts of Tabasseran and Kuragh; and when, in 1820, the Russians succeeded in

subjugating Kuragh and in partly devastating the interior of Tabasseran, this Mohammed Effendi traversed every village and hamlet in the country to excite the zealous hatred of the Faithful against the Infidel, and to implore them to be true to the standard of the prophet and arrest the progress of the Christian foe. Old and young to a man responded to his call. Inflamed by his rapturous orations, they came thronging in to swell his ranks, and exulted in the sanguine anticipation that now at last they would exterminate the Christian invaders.

CHAPTER VII.

First appearance of Kasi-Mullah.—He commences his agitation.—Takes a fortress from the Russians.—Ineffectual opposition of General Yermoloff.—Prince Paskiewitsch appointed.—Cis-Caucasia and Trans-Caucasia.—Georgia an easy conquest.—Attacks of the Circassians.—Grand plan of Paskiewitsch for dividing the Caucasus.

Among the hearers of Mohammed Effendi was the devout youth, named Kasi-Mohammed (afterwards Kasi-Mullah), in whom especially the preacher's harangues had kindled an ardent desire to effect the deliverance of his country.

After listening long enough to become inspired with the most fervent enthusiasm, he retired to a lonely spot, consecrated by tradition, and there, rapt in dreams of future glory, he brooded over the plans

that should carry destruction to the door of the invader. When he had spent some time in seclusion, he returned to his native place, where he was elected Murshid of Tchetchenia and the coast defiles.

He now began his operations by agitating the people; counselling them to wage an exterminating warfare against all unbelievers, and feeding their fanaticism by wonderful accounts of the revelations made to him, during his pilgrimage to the tomb of Abu-Musselim, one of the heroes who fell in the battle of Kunstagh, and whose departed spirit, as Kasi-Mullah alleged, had commanded him to lead the children of the Prophet to glory.

Of commanding stature, and gifted with glowing eloquence, he acquired the greatest influence over the multitude; the ranks of his adherents were rapidly swelled by new and zealous converts; and taking advan-

tage of moments of ardour and excitement, he often succeeded in surprising the Russians, and even wrested from them the fort Amir Hadji Yurt, in the country of the Koumik Tatars.

The Russians, it is true, afterwards recaptured this fortress, but they had to lavish a great amount of force to attain their object, and in the meantime the Murshid had, by successful stratagem, secured to himself the devotion of the mountaineers, amongst whom his fame was now spreading like wildfire.

General Yermoloff had to strain all his faculties, and make tremendous exertions to oppose the formidable power of the Murshid, and at last he only succeeded in destroying a few of the Aouls on the Sundcha and the Argun territory; though even these conquests, trifling as they were, were exulted over by him as great victories,

on account of the difficulties he had had to overcome.

The Czar, however, great as the difficulties were, became impatient with Yermoloff's slow progress, and appointed Prince Paskiewitsch to supersede him; and the latter general, on his departure, received imperative orders to confine the Caucasians within the limits to which the policy of the Russian cabinet had restricted them a century ago.

Paskiewitsch did not disappoint the hopes of his imperial master, for with a new army at his command, he fought so successfully against Caucasians, Persians, and Turks, that he was enabled in the treaties of peace of 1827 and 1829 to secure to Russia, in this part of the globe, the empire at which she had so long been aiming. Persia agreed to hand over to Russia Talisch, Nachitchevan, and Erivan; while the Turks relin-

quished Anapa, Poti, the whole of the Circassian coast on the Black Sea, the Protectorate of the Circassians, and the Pachalic of Achaltzik; the Caucasus it was agreed should be confined within its present limits, namely, the Manysh and Kouma on the north, and Araxes, Arocat, Arpatshai, and Choloki on the south.

Cis-Caucasia was to include, with the government of Stavropol, four districts, namely, Stavropol, Patigorsk, Mosdok, and Kislyar, and the town of Stavropol was to be the residence of the governor. This territory contains 1430 square miles, and counts 180,000 inhabitants.

Trans-Caucasia, with the head governor's seat at Tiflis, includes the following provinces:—

1. Georgia, with the districts of Tiflis, Signache, Telavi, Ducheti, Gori, and Elizabethspol, a district of 832 square miles and

about 400,000 inhabitants, among which are 20,000 Ossetes, 60,000 Tatars, and 10,000 Pshawes or Tushes.

2. Imeritia, with 640 square miles, divided into the districts of Imeretia, with 100,000; Mingrelia, with 70,000; and Gurriel, with 20,000 inhabitants, all of whom are of Georgian origin. Also it includes Abchasia, with 52,000 inhabitants, whose allegiance to Russia is of a very doubtful and precarious nature.

3. The province of Achaltzik, with 17,000 inhabitants, of whom many are Armenians.

4. The province of Armenia, with 360 square miles, and included in which are the districts of Erivan, with 34,000 Armenian inhabitants and 30,000 Tatars; and Nachitevan, with 8,000 Armenians and 11,000 Tatars.

5. The province of Shirvan with the dis-

tricts of Shirvan, containing 62,000 Tatars and 6,000 Armenians; Karabagh, with 35,000 Tatar inhabitants and 20,000 Armenians; and Tcheki, with 45,000 Tatars and 9,000 Armenians.

To these must be added the Khanate of Kalissh, with Lenkoran on the Caspian Sea, and the country of the Lesghian tribes: the Confederation of Dsaro-Belokan, with 46,000 inhabitants; the Sultanate of Yelissai, with 21,000; and the territory of the Anzooks, the Didoi, and Kabutchi, with 32,000; all of whom frequently rebel against their Russian taskmasters. The allegiance of these people being enforced by military despotism of the worst kind, they often seize the opportunity of the Russian garrison of occupation being decimated by sickness, to drive them with great loss out of their territories.

6. Daghestan, with the Shamkulat of

Tarku, with 60,000 inhabitants; the districts of Derbent, with 6,000; of Kuba, 46,000; and of Baku, with 15,000.

Some Russian authorities speak also of Lesghistan and Circassia; but their organization, even if they can be counted at all among the Russian dominions, is so very uncertain, that any record of their condition must be illusory.

Prince Paskiewitch, having settled the boundary question, now devoted himself to the consolidation of the newly acquired territory, by conciliating as far as possible the masses of the people. Georgia gave him no trouble, for he allowed the nobles to retain their rank, property, and privileges; and they, on their side, manifested a vehement desire for fine Russian uniforms and glittering decorations. The female population of Georgia, too, was delighted with the fashions introduced by the Russian ladies, and soon imitated them.

As adherents of the Greek Church, the Georgians were strongly biassed in favour of Russian rule, and still stronger ties were soon formed between the nations by the intermarriages of Georgian with Russian families. In Mingrelia and Imeretia the poverty-stricken population, reduced by the incessant wars and oppression of their rulers to the most abject condition, submitted unresistingly to the dictates of Paskiewitch; and he secured the golden opinions of the Mahometan population by prohibiting the Russian priesthood from compelling their attendance on the services of the Greek Church, by building mosques and schools, and by leaving their internal jurisdiction and customs undisturbed.

Thus far successful, the prince directed his serious attention to his grand object of securing Russian ascendancy in the mountains, by cutting off the communica-

tion of the hostile tribes with the subject races.

The coast of the Black Sea being now in the hands of the Russians, they built along it fort after fort, without paying the slightest attention to the attacks of the enraged mountaineers, or to the ravages of the pestilential climate, by which their garrisons of occupation were too frequently carried off. All losses were quickly replaced by fresh drafts of men, and as ships of war were continually cruising along the coast, the landing of arms, ammunition, or stores, by the enemy, became almost impossible.

As also the Russian forts on the Kouban commanded the valleys, the communication on that side was, more or less, under Russian control.

The Circassians from time to time renewed their efforts to assault, capture, or destroy one or more of these forts; but

they never attempted to retain their conquests, retiring immediately to their mountain fastnesses, which then became the targets for incessant attacks by fire and sword, directed against them by the Russian divisions stationed at Protschnoi-Okop; and by these means many of the mountaineers were brought into subjection.

In the Western Caucasus, the Tcherkess or Circassian tribes; the Abasechs, Shapsooks, and Natagoi; the Abassians of the Ubich, Madore, and Posib, as well as the Suaneti, are still in the enjoyment of freedom and independence; and, on the whole, the allegiance of the tribes supposed to be subject to Russia is of a very doubtful nature. Their disaffection is often manifested by outbreaks against the army of occupation, attended by disastrous consequences; but their nominal subjection is nevertheless a key to future conquests, and pregnant with important results.

With a view to the isolation of the various tribes still hostile to Russia, Prince Paskiewitsch formed a plan for connecting the conquered districts by four military roads. The one was intended to form a communication between the Bay of Gelendchick and the Northern Kouban; the second, to proceed from Abchasia across the loftiest ranges to the valley of the Podkouma; the third, to cross the Lesghian mountains from Kachetia to the valley of Koissu, and through its defiles to the Tarku; and the fourth, to traverse the mountain ridge of the Muchi into the valley of Samura, and thence to Derbent. Cleverly as this plan was arranged, however, it was found, when it came to be executed, that the obstacles to be overcome were of so formidable a character, that only the first of the proposed roads could be completed and properly defended by forts.

Had Paskiewitsch succeeded in his project, he would have divided the Caucasus into four districts, each of which could have been separately subjugated and held in check by a comparatively small force; and, what was still more important, the isolation of the hostile tribes of mountaineers would have been perfect, and their union in large masses to attack the Russians rendered impossible.

CHAPTER VIII.

Further Exploits of Kasi-Mullah—March through Daghestan.—Takes Tarku by storm.—Defeated by General Kochanoff.—Surprise of Kislyar.—Repeated Revolts of the Dsharan Tribes.—Campaign of General Rosen.—Himri destroyed and Kasi-Mullah killed.—Hamsad Bey becomes the leader of the insurgents.—Assassination of the Khanum and her sons.—Is himself in turn assassinated in the Mosque.—Guerilla warfare.

DAGHESTAN had now became tranquil, and the Shamkul of Tarku had even rendered the Russians considerable service; but the territories of the Tchetchenzes and Lesghians were daily becoming more disturbed.

The last achievements of Yermoloff had, indeed, served for a time to abate the ardour of both races; but Kasi-Mullah was

neither intimidated nor inclined to inactivity, and he was making every exertion to extend his influence and his fame; while, knowing that he was feared and hated by the priesthood, he resolved to humble this and other factious parties before re-commencing operations with his increased forces against the Russians.

On the plateau of Arrakan, on the Avarean range, he attacked Sahif Effendi, the chief of his opponents, and defeated him, so that he had to escape by flight; while Kasi-Mullah, at the head of his daily increasing forces, directed his march towards the northern mountains. Encouraged by his success he then ventured on attempting to detach the aged Khanum of Kunsagh from the Russians, under whose protection she stood, and persuading her to espouse the cause of the prophet; but as she declined his overtures, he resolved on forcing

her to compliance and to the support of his army; and in 1828 he attacked her forces, but failed in the attempt and was obliged to retreat. Though eager to avenge his discomfiture on the Russians, who had come to the assistance of the Khanum, he did not find the opportunity he sought till 1831, when, marching into Daghestan with the flag of insurrection in one hand and the Koran in the other, he roused the country to rebellion, attacked the chief Russian forts on the Caspian, and assaulting the town of Tarku took it by storm and entirely routed his enemies.

After this achievement he besieged the citadel of Bourmaya, which was considered impregnable even by the Russians; cut off the supply of water, and so exhausted the garrison by constant attacks, that he would soon have captured the fortress and made a triumphal entry, had not the Russian

General Kochanoff all at once come to the assistance of the besieged. Kochanoff forced Kasi-Mullah to retire to the mountains; but he ravaged and destroyed the country as he went, and as soon as he had collected his forces again he set out for Derbent. For eight days the town was in great danger, but on Kochanoff's advancing to its succour Kasi-Mullah was again defeated.

Undismayed, however, by this second failure, he directed his efforts against other equally important but less strongly fortified points, and these fell an easy prey to his arms. By the 11th of November he had carried fire and sword to the very walls of Kislyar, a fortress situated on the Terek, in one of the five districts of Cis-Caucasia. This fortress he afterwards surprised and took, and he only evacuated it to return laden with booty to his native place, Himri,

there to spend the winter in comfort and security, and make preparations for the ensuing campaign.

The unusually stormy insurrections in the east and north-east of the Caucasus, imposed, in the course of the year 1831, a great deal of labour and anxiety on the Russian generals, which were still further augmented by outbreaks in the south.

The Confederation of Dshar, though repeatedly forced to submit to the Russians, had often successfully attempted to throw off their yoke, but for this hardihood they had been severely chastised by Yermoloff. Hardly, however, had the Persian war broken out, than they once more recovered their independence, and maintained it during the whole time the Persian and Turkish wars lasted.

After the conclusion of peace, Paskiewitsch forced them back to their nominal

allegiance to Russia, and inflicted severe punishment for these insurrectionary attempts; but his severity was of little avail, for hardly had he quitted the Caucasus when they attacked the Russian garrison, which they defeated and took from it four pieces of artillery. To avoid such disasters for the future the Russians now constructed the fort of Sakatal, by which the position was completely commanded.

These revolutionary movements of the Dsharan races, which had occasioned so much uneasiness to the Russians, had afforded great encouragement to a fanatical Lesghian chief, a bitter enemy of the Russians, named Hamsad Bey, by whose instrumentality the disturbances had been frequently fomented. Under pretence of entering into negotiations with him, the Russians had enticed him into their camp and made him prisoner; and although

they had kept him in captivity but a very short time, and when they released him loaded him with presents, his capture was regarded as an act of treachery, and tended to embitter his hostility against them. He returned the Russian presents with contempt, and hastened to unite his forces with those of Kasi-Mullah.

In the following spring, Kasi-Mullah broke forth again from his mountain retreat; and this time he chose the Terek line for the theatre of his operations, and even threatened Vladikavkas, the key to the pass of Dariel, before he returned, richly laden with plunder, to his mountains.

The Russians now felt serious apprehensions that the forts which they had constructed, with the view of overawing their enemies, would not even serve to secure the safety of their own garrisons. The activity of the mountaineers frustrated all

their attempts to be on their guard against them, and they were sure to make their appearance where they were least expected. General Rosen, the successor to Prince Paskiewitsch, determined therefore to direct an energetic campaign against Himri, Kasi-Mullah's native place, and chief stronghold. He marched against it with a large and effective force, and he not only succeeded in destroying it, but Kasi-Mullah himself fell in the defence.

The victory, however, was not achieved without immense sacrifices. The Russian troops had to climb almost untrodden mountains, exposed all the way to the attacks of the enemy's sharpshooters; and every step of their path was marked by the bodies of soldiers who fell from the ranks, before they reached the summit, where they had to storm Himri, the Ehrenbreitstein of the Caucasus.

The mountaineers fought valiantly, every man among them braving death as long as he was able to bear a weapon.

With the fall of Himri and of Kasi-Mullah, the Russians imagined their task completed; but they had yet to learn that Kasi-Mullah was only the pioneer of other opponents, who would offer them still more determined resistance, and that the onslaught of the Tchetchenzes and Lesghians were but introductory to still bolder exploits.

Hamsad Bey, the irreconcilable enemy of Russia, took the place of his slain companion, as leader of his organized force; and on meeting with opposition from various chiefs, he attacked two of them, the Kadi of Dargo and the Shamkul of Tarku, in their own territories, and forced them to assist him. After this, he entreated the aged Khanum of Kunsagh to support him,

and when she refused, he caused her two sons, and afterwards the aged princess herself, to be assassinated.

But Hamsad Bey was overtaken by a just retribution for this deed. On visiting the mosque a few days after the murder, he was himself assassinated in the very midst of his Murids by Osman and Hadji Murad, allies of the Khanum, and who had been educated with her sons. The Murids, to avenge their master, then killed Osman, and Hadji now called on the people to take vengeance on the murderers of their beloved princess. The people responded to the call, and returned with him to the mosque to slaughter the Murids, some of whom had escaped and taken refuge in a neighbouring tower; but their fierce pursuers set it on fire, and they all perished in the flames.

In the meantime, the Russians had dis-

covered that they had been quite mistaken in supposing the spirit of insurrection in the Caucasus stifled by the death of Kasi-Mullah. It became evident, even in the districts garrisoned by the Russians, that this was by no means the case, and they therefore changed their tactics, and from a defensive, adopted an aggressive mode of warfare.

In 1834, they stood once more before Himri, and captured it this time with less trouble than in 1832, utterly destroying it, so as not to leave one stone upon another; yet notwithstanding the completeness of the destruction, the mountaineers had by 1836 built on the same height another fort, still more formidable.

The Russians now contemplated attacking the mountaineers in rapid succession; but the latter frustrated their design by suddenly moving off, just as their enemies

were ready to give them battle, and proceeding in a direction in which it was not possible for the Russians to follow with equal celerity, and where they lost more men, by want of provisions and forced marches, than they could have done by an engagement.

Frequently it happened, that when they had defeated the mountaineers in a skirmish in some valley, and had to pass some defiles on their way to their forts, they were picked off by hundreds as they went by the Caucasian sharpshooters.

It is this guerilla warfare, still practised by Schamyl, that keeps the Russians in constant apprehension of losing their hold on the Caucasus.

CHAPTER IX.

Schamyl's birth and early youth.—His natural qualifications for the mission he assumes.—Russian advances into Georgia, etc.—Schamyl's first appearance on the theatre of the war.—Capture of Himri.—Schamyl's mysterious disappearance.—Fights a pitched battle with the Russians.—Russians compelled to retire from Achulko.—The arrival of the Czar.—Achulko taken.—Schamyl's escape.—Various events of the war.

WHAT Themistocles was to the Greeks, what Wallace and Tell were to their respective countrymen, such is Schamyl to the brave warriors of the Caucasus. For many years he has been struggling to defend the freedom of his native soil from the crafty policy, the arms and the flatteries of Russia, and to drive back the invader from those lovely fertile valleys, which,

though interspersed between the rocky defiles of snow capped mountains and almost inaccessible from without, are yet amply provided with all the necessaries of life.

This remarkable man, the valiant chief and venerated sultan and prophet of his people, was born in 1797 at the aoul of Himri, the birthplace also of his celebrated predecessor, Kasi-Mullah. The people among whom his earliest years were passed are, like all mountaineers, devotedly attached to their native land, and this feeling was probably imbibed by him as well as others with his earliest breath. These people are also remarkable for their skill in martial exercises and in horsemanship, a singular anomaly in a race of mountaineers, which has been sometimes accounted for by their descent being traced to a remnant of European crusaders. Their complexion

and deportment show, indeed, little traces of an Asiatic origin; and though they acknowledge the authority of the Koran, they entertain among them a vague expectation of a Saviour who is to supersede Mahomet the prophet of God—a popular belief which is said to have formed a great obstacle to Schamyl's success.

In his early youth he is stated to have been somewhat feeble in his bodily constitution, but exerting himself to overcome this natural inferiority by courage and resolution. Even then, he held himself in some measure aloof from his companions, was fond of spending many hours at a time in solitude in some wild and picturesque spot, and maintained his influence with those around him by a certain reserved solemnity of manner, as well as by the superiority of his talents and learning.

As he grew to a more mature age he also

became distinguished for the fiery and impassioned eloquence, which is, perhaps, the most efficient of all means of acquiring influence over a brave, simple, and excitable people; and to this qualification he added that of perfect self-control, an immoveable calmness of aspect in moments of the utmost peril, and a rigid temperance in his mode of life, which seldom fails to ensure respect to those who have the means of indulgence within their reach.

We have seen in what manner Georgia came into Russian hands, and by what a series of successes and stratagems they contrived to plant their forts and strongholds in all the passes of the mountains, and along the coasts of the Black and Caspian Seas. Having afterwards obtained a footing in Armenia, the granary of the whole southern region, they subjugated the greater part of the country, and hemmed in the in-

dependent tribes between the Cossacks on the north and the conquered country on the south.

They had just enlisted in a local Nizam a large number both of the Christian and Mahometan inhabitants under the Russian standard, when Schamyl appeared with Hamsad Bey on the theatre of the war, proclaiming that he had, in a personal communication with the prophet, been entrusted with the mission to free his country from its invaders, and announcing himself to be invincible in arms and invulnerable to mortal weapon. The whole of Daghestan rose at his summons, and he took the fortresses of the Tarku and Derbent, and plundered and laid waste the Russian territory as far as Kislyar. In the defence of Himri (the chief emporium of arms and ammunition for the Caucasus), where Kasi-Mullah lost his life, Schamyl was really

wounded, both by bullet and bayonet; but as he fought his way through the ranks of the enemy, and afterwards disappeared in a very sudden and mysterious manner, his followers were confirmed in the opinion that he bore a charmed life, and was their appointed prophet and deliverer.

An interval of quiet succeeded the capture of Himri, and this led to the idea that the Caucasian wars were at an end; but Schamyl still remained at the head of a numerous body of armed men, and occupied himself with freeing the passes and securing supplies whenever they were needed; and while the native tribes in their mountain fastnesses refused to pay tribute or offer any kind of submission to the invaders, they, on their sides, had to entrench themselves behind walls which they dared not leave, either for exercise or water, except in sufficient numbers to

guard against surprise. In fact, although the Russians were supposed to have remained in possession of the Caucasus, they were obliged to remain in their forts or in their great lines of road, and they were never safe when beyond the reach of their cannon.

In 1837, Schamyl, having obtained considerable reinforcements, measured his strength with that of the Russians in a pitched battle; and his success so greatly impaired the *prestige* of the Russian arms, that their general resolved to deal with him at once as he had done with his predecessor—that is, to march upon his secluded stronghold with an efficient body of troops, capture or kill him, and annihilate any force that he might have collected.

On their march towards Schamyl's hiding place, the Russians fortified Chunsak, much to the displeasure of the reigning princess,

although she was devoted to the czar; and this Avarean expedition, as it was called, then proceeded to attack Ashiltack, an aoul or village in Andi, consisting of three hundred dwellings, partly rough stone houses and partly caves cut in rocks. It was defended by no less than five thousand Circassians, and was not taken without considerable loss on the side of the Russians. After this, though they were greatly reduced by this action and by the fatigues of their march, they assaulted Achulko with impetuous valour; but Schamyl offered such a determined resistance, that, though their cannon destroyed some of his towers, he compelled them to retreat, the Circassians pursuing them for nearly two miles with shouts of victory, and they retired through the defile of Koissu without gaining a foot of ground beyond their military road.

So great was the sensation created by this defeat, that the Emperor Nicholas now resolved to come in person to the Caucasus, trusting that his presence, while it encouraged his own soldiers, would strike terror into his enemies. His imperial aspect does not, however, seemed to have proved quite so awful to the mountaineers as he had anticipated; and when he sent forth a proclamation stating that he had powder enough to blow up their very mountains should he so please, they were by no means so much alarmed as he intended them to be.

He made, too, the unwelcome discovery, that the army of the Caucasus was no more free from corruption than any other Russian institution, and he ordered General Rosen to be superseded in favour of General Golovine, who then received reinforcements to the number of eighty thou-

sand men. With this army a decisive blow was to be struck, and Achulko, Schamyl's strongest hold, taken at any cost. Nearly one half of the Russian troops, however, were lost in various ways, and still the object was not effected. Thereupon General Grabbe was appointed commander-in-chief, and after having fought some disastrous battles, he appeared before Achulko, which he besieged for two months.

This mountain fortress, the name of which is said to be a word of Tatar derivation, signifying "meeting place in time of disturbance", is situated on a high rock, one side of which falls precipitously to the river Koissu, a depth of six hundred feet, while the other loses itself in inaccessible defiles. Nature, therefore, has done much for the defence of this place, and what she has neglected has been supplied by the hand of art; for Schamyl, much as he said

of the help of the prophet, did not rely implicitly on it, but surrounded Achulko with walls and towers, whose strength the Russians had often proved in impetuous and untiring attacks.

But this time the emperor's orders were to take the fortress at all hazards; and after the capture of entrenchment after entrenchment, fort after fort, and a murderous assault of five days duration, General Grabbe did take it.

The din of combat died away during the night of the fifth day, and on the morning of the sixth the Russians found themselves masters of the ruins of Achulko. But where now was Schamyl? Neither among the slain nor among the prisoners was he to be found. One or two of his men were seen here and there on the tops of some of the rocks; and after a while some deserters joined the Russians, and confessed that

Schamyl was hidden, and intended to escape during the night.

All approaches to the caves opposite Achulko were now strictly guarded, and the Russians kept vigilant watch. At midnight the Russian sentinels heard a slight noise proceeding from one of the caves in the rocks above them; they concealed themselves, and presently a man was let down to the plateau by means of a rope,—and after looking cautiously about he made a signal, and a second descended, swiftly and silently, and was followed by a third enveloped in a white mantle, such as Schamyl frequently wore. The Russians sprang from their place of concealment, and after a short resistance took all three prisoners, and carried them exultingly to the tent of their general. When they got there, however, they discovered that the whole affair had been a stratagem, got up

to favour the escape of Schamyl, who had descended the moment the Russians had left the spot,—and taking advantage of the excitement in their camp consequent on his supposed capture, had made good his retreat, and reached the banks of the Koissu, without his enemies being able to do anything more than send after him a few useless bullets.

The immense sacrifices that the Russians had made in the hope of capturing Schamyl were therefore entirely useless.

In the very same year he made his appearance again at the head of a large force in Kachetia, in the most southern part of the Caucasus, threatening Sakatal and Ruchi, annoying the Russians when in small numbers, but always dispersing at the approach of any stronger body of the enemy until he reached Tchetchenia, when he fought a battle with them and gained the victory.

Movements and achievements of this kind, and the astonishing reports of the defeats suffered by the Russians, extended and strengthened his influence among the mountaineers, who now rallied around him in greater masses, believing that he had a divine mission to free them from their hated enemies.

In 1840 the Circassians stormed the forts of Wiliaminofsk, Lagaressk, and Abin, and repeatedly crossed the Terek, defying the Russians in all directions. Schamyl meanwhile took the initiative, and attacked their largest fortress, Nicolaizioski, which he took and destroyed, and then again dispersed his followers.

The Russians rebuilt these forts, garrisoned them, and then sent General Anrep to avenge the indignities they had suffered; and this he did, but not till he had himself sustained considerable loss. Seizing

the opportunity when Schamyl had lessened the efficiency of his forces by dividing them, he made a well-planned attack on him with all the troops at his command, and succeeded in obtaining a decided advantage.

In 1841 the Russians were again in so far successful, that they were enabled to confine the war to Schamyl's country; but in the beginning of 1842 he advanced into the Russian territory, and with the celerity that characterised all his movements, appeared all at once before Kislyar, with a force of twenty thousand men; defeated the Russians, though they fought bravely to oppose his advance, and returned to his camp laden with rich booty.

But this year had still more severe reverses in store for the Russians.

General Grabbe, the conqueror of Achulko, had been ordered to take Dargo, one of Schamyl's strongholds, and to inflict

severe chastisement upon him. He advanced, therefore, towards it with a powerful army, but made only slow progress, and paying for every foot of land he gained a heavy price in human life. While still at a considerable distance from Dargo, he saw that to attempt to take it with his exhausted, discouraged, and decimated troops, would lead to utter discomfiture and ruin; and, bowed down by care, he had just resolved on submitting to the painful necessity of a retreat, when Schamyl's forces fell suddenly on him in the forest of Itschkeri, and mowed down everything before them. When at last Grabbe reached the shelter of the Russian forts, he found he had lost the greater part of his officers and eight thousand men.

After this, Generals Grabbe and Golovine were both recalled, although the Emperor attributed their failure more to the

elements than to their own want of skill or energy. He still, however, persisted in ignoring the military talents and strategic skill of Schamyl, though these were now in the highest state of activity, and gaining him continually fresh adherents, even among the Tchetchenzes, who the Russians had supposed would never be induced to join his ranks. The agitation he had set on foot had also gained him friends in the Kabarda, and Akucha, Karakaitach, and Tabasseran had openly joined him, so that the Russians were now attacked and menaced in every direction, and the whole of their army had to be confined within their forts.

General Neidhardt, the newly appointed commander-in-chief, wrote despatch after despatch, pointing out the deplorable condition he found himself in, and urging the necessity of meeting Schamyl's strategy,

which was of no ordinary kind, by some other methods than those indicated in the plan of attack arranged for him at Petersburg, and which he had been commanded to observe. After some delay, he received reinforcements, but was again recommended to follow the Petersburg plan, and also to arrange his army of 130,000 men into five divisions, march upon Schamyl from as many different points, destroy every field, and overcome every obstacle that might present itself, and finally, to surround and defeat Schamyl. The difficulties presented by the peculiar nature of the ground to be traversed, as well as the scarcity of provisions for the maintenance of so great an army, had not at all been taken into consideration in Petersburg.

Great delay was occasioned by the non-arrival of despatches, or returns from an agent, who had been sent to Astrachan

with a million of silver roubles to purchase food for the army; and after all, the delay was of no avail, for no tidings of the agent could be obtained.

Neidhardt now attacked the Tcherkeges, on the Sulak, with thirty thousand men; yet it took him a whole month to bring an unimportant village to subjection, and in doing so, he lost great numbers, both of officers and men. He then advanced on Dargo, where Schamyl was awaiting him with a body of men amounting to twenty-four thousand. Numerous as his force was, however, he avoided coming to a pitched battle, and contented himself with molesting the Russians incessantly, and harassing their forces whenever they were preparing to attack him, and then suddenly falling into their rear, until Neidhardt was obliged to retreat.

In addition to this failure, another cir-

cumstance occurred, by which the Petersburg plan was rendered entirely nugatory.

Schamyl had hitherto met with no sympathy among the south-western population, and though the Dsarans were favourably inclined to him, the fort of Sakatal kept them in check. The Sultan of Yelessy, who enjoyed far and wide the reputation of being a pious, good, and great man, and who exercised a powerful influence over the Lesghians and the Tartars of Cheki, Ruchi, and Shirvan, had hitherto held himself aloof, and resisted all attempts to gain him over to Schamyl's cause. Now, however, he very unexpectedly came forward of his own accord, and joined him. To the Russians, his desertion of their cause was a great blow, and he soon afterwards even expelled their official persons from his territory, and then descended the Alasan, to do battle for his newly adopted party.

In the first instance the sultan was successful, but he was afterwards defeated in a desperate engagement, and so much reduced that he had to fly for refuge to Schamyl, who received him with open arms, and he has ever since resided with him, under the name of Daniel Bey, assisting Schamyl by his sagacious counsels, his influence, and his personal bravery.

The sultan's defection from the Russians was also of great service to Schamyl, by compelling them to divide their new forces, half of which only could advance against him, while the rest were engaged in keeping in order their former subjects.

CHAPTER X.

Prince Woronzoff appointed to command the army of the Caucasus.—His unlimited authority.—Suffers repeated defeats.—Change in the Russian plan of warfare. — Schamyl ravages the Kabarda. — The Grand Duke Alexander arrives.—Schamyl attacks the forts on the Black Sea.—Makes a descent on Armenia.—Gains a complete victory.—Inaction of Schamyl during the last year or two.—Specimens of his oratory.—Instance of his stern discipline.—Present state of the Caucasus.

THE failure of General Neidhardt's campaign having created great displeasure against him at the court of Petersburg, he was dismissed, and General, now Prince, Woronzoff appointed to take his place, and invested, at the same time, with such unlimited power and authority, as had not been granted to any Russian subject since the time of Catherine the Second and her

favourite Potemkin. He was to be responsible to the emperor alone for anything he thought proper to do; from the Pruth to the Araxes his word was to be law; he was to bestow rewards and distinctions in the army without even asking the emperor's sanction; to be allowed to bring officers, civil and military, of every class, before courts martial at his pleasure, and to inflict even the punishment of death, if he thought fit. The only order he was required to obey was that of taking Dargo and Schamyl, and for this purpose an army of two hundred thousand men was placed under his command.

Woronzoff set out with twenty-four thousand men to effect these objects; and as he advanced towards Dargo, the Lesghians feigned to evacuate the district, and allowed him to cross the pass of Andi unmolested. Then Schamyl, having previously destroyed

all the habitations and fields on his line of march, so that neither man nor beast could find there the least support, appeared on the heights with a numerous force and surrounded the Russians; while Hadji Murad intercepted Prince Belontoff, who was in charge of a large convoy of provisions, which consequently fell into the enemy's hands.

For three weeks Woronzoff was kept in this painful position; but at last reinforcements were promised to relieve him, and General Gogatl, having entrenched his camp and secured his line of communication, began to move towards Dargo.

The more nearly he approached it, the more numerous became the enemy, and the greater the obstacles he had to encounter. Abatis after abatis had to be taken at the point of the bayonet; and when at last he reached Dargo, he found in it only a desolate

deserted village, stripped of every comfort, and destitute even of food.

Woronzoff had now no other resource than to retreat to Gersesaul, but on his retreat he had to encounter the well-calculated attacks of Schamyl's forces, and by these he was all but crushed. It is alleged that he reached Gersesaul with a few generals, still fewer proportionably of other officers, and only four thousand men. During this campaign he had learned the bitter lesson, that Schamyl and his brave Lesghians were formidable foes; and that their European opponents must often be favoured by fortune, if in a conflict with these mountaineers they could merely maintain their position, not to speak of gaining any advantage.

In a conference that Woronzoff held with the Emperor Nicholas in 1845, he announced his intention of changing his

system of warfare. Instead of undertaking great expeditions against the heads of the Circassian tribes, Woronzoff proposed to weary them out by delay, isolation, and exhaustion; in short, to adopt Schamyl's own plan of warfare, and in the meantime gradually, if possible, to destroy the national unity and detach the smaller tribes by compulsion or bribery, and so obtain by stratagem the standing in the country which he had been unable to secure by force of arms.

The emperor seeing that Woronzoff, with all his talents and the vast powers at his command, had, under most favourable circumstances, considerable difficulty in retaining, even nominally, his possessions in the Caucasus, acquiesed in all these arrangements. Unmolested by foreign powers, and only engaged in suppressing the Caucasian insurrection, he found that all his energies

were required for the task. Woronzoff spent some time in making the necessary preparations for the capture of Dargo-Vedenno, Schamyl's favourite residence, and in 1846 the Russian detachments were ready to march; but again did Schamyl anticipate their commander's plans, and doom him to disappointment.

While Woronzoff was engaged in cutting down and burning the Tchetchenian forest, where the enemy had so often fallen unexpectedly on the Russians and made great havoc among them, Schamyl, collecting all his strength, made a forced march across the mountains with a body of twenty thousand horse and foot, took the Kabardines by surprise, punished them for their defection, ravaged their whole country, carried off a number of prisoners, and returned laden with plunder to his mountain fastness before the Russian troops could come up with him at all.

Schamyl had gained his objects; by boldly surprising the Russians within their own lines, he had spread terror among the tribes subject to Russia, and he had compelled Woronzoff to refrain from advancing to molest him in his mountain home.

In the following year he was less successful, for he allowed himself to be persuaded by a Russian deserter to attack Fort Golovine, from which he was obliged to retire with great loss. A few months later he made an attack on the enemy's centre, and though he was forced to retreat and disperse his forces, he carried off large booty.

In 1850 the Czarowitch Alexander, the present emperor, came to take part in the Caucasian, war and re-animate the sinking courage of the Russian army. In 1852 Prince Burietinsky, with a body of fifteen hundred men, marched rapidly

through the "Devil's Pass," and leaving a part of his troops to maintain that position, attacked an aoul called Rauhkaleh, and cut to pieces all they could meet with. But on their return they found their rearguard engaged with the foe, and it was with difficulty they could cut their way back to the main body.

In 1853 Schamyl attacked the forts on the Black Sea, from Redout Kaleh to Naroquiskoi, and not without success; and throughout the autumn of that year and the commencement of 1854, the Circassians were more than usually active—probably because the Russians, having other enemies to contend with, afforded them a favourable opportunity.

In 1855 Schamyl made a descent upon the Russian territories in Armenia, at the head of twenty thousand of his mountain warriors, and he gained a complete victory;

for the Russians, according to the reports, lost four thousand men, as well as all their artillery, tents, and baggage.

During the Crimean war, Schamyl had unlimited range across the isthmus from sea to sea, and only fort Anapa, the largest of the Russian forts, remained unmolested by him. Even this fort was said in some accounts to have been abandoned, in order to strengthen Prince Menschikoff's army in the Crimea; but Schamyl seemed to have become weary of the war. When the Russian princesses who had been in captivity in his hands were liberated by him, the Russians in return restored to Schamyl his eldest son, who had been taken from him when a child and educated in the Russian army. This son, it is said, has ever since influenced Schamyl in their favour, and induced him to refrain from assisting the Turks.

Of the bravery of the Russian army,—both officers and men,—of their fortitude amidst continual reverses, both from the sword of the enemy and from sickness and sufferings, such as were often of a nature to disspirit the stoutest troops in the world, too much cannot be said. Perhaps no other army than the Russian could have borne up with such an undaunted perseverance against a warrior surrounded by so dazzling a prestige as Schamyl, and who had in so extraordinary a degree the power of exciting the enthusiasm of his followers.

Many specimens of his eloquent addresses have been preserved,—though they cannot well be judged apart from the peculiar and exciting circumstances under which they were delivered. The following passages may serve to give some imperfect idea of their style and tone:

"Do not believe," he says on one occa-

sion, "that God favours the greater number. God is on the side of the good,—and they are always less numerous than the godless. Are there not fewer roses than weeds? Is there not more dirt than pearls—more vermin than useful animals? Is not gold rarer than the ignoble metals? And are we not nobler than gold or roses, than pearls or horses, or than all useful animals together: for all the treasures of the world are transitory, but to us eternal life is promised.

"If there are more weeds than roses, shall we, instead of rooting out the weeds, wait till they have quite overgrown and choked the noble flowers? And if our enemies are more numerous than we are, shall we, therefore, allow ourselves to be entangled in their nets?

"Do not go on saying our enemies have taken Tcherkey, besieged Achulko, con-

quered all Avaria! If the lightning strike a tree, do all the other trees on that account bow their heads before it? Do they fall down for fear they should be struck also? O ye of little faith! Follow the example of the trees of the forest. Had they tongues to speak they would put you to shame!

"If the worm devours the fruit, does the other fruit rot away for fear of being devoured?

"Do not alarm yourselves because the infidels increase so quickly, and continually send forth fresh warriors to the battle-field, in the place of those whom we have destroyed. I tell you, a thousand poisonous fungi spring out of the earth before one good tree reaches maturity.

"I am the root of the tree of liberty. My Murids are the trunk, and you are the branches. But shall the rottenness of one branch entail the destruction of the whole

tree? God will lop off the rotten branches, and cast them into eternal fire!

"Enrol yourselves, then, among the number of those who fight for the faith of Mahomet, and you will gain my favour, and I will be your protector.

"But if you persist in giving ear to the seductive speeches of the Christian dogs, instead of listening to my exhortations, I will carry out what Kasi-Mullah formerly threatened you with. My bands shall burst upon your aouls like a thunder-cloud, and take by force what you will not yield to persuasion. I will wade in blood. Devastation and terror shall follow me; and what the power of speech cannot obtain, shall be won by the edge of the sword!"

But Schamyl is not merely an impassioned enthusiast: he is a most stern and rigid disciplinarian, of which, among others, one terrible instance is related.

His mother, whom he treated with the greatest respect, and who exercised considerable influence over him, had on one occasion ventured to introduce to him some messengers who came with proposals for a dishonourable peace.

After hearing what she had to say, he shut himself up in the mosque, and remained there three days and nights. Then he came forth, pale and haggard, with his eyes swollen; and calling his Murids and the people around him, declared it to be the will of Allah that his mother should receive a hundred lashes, for having made that vile proposal to him. The poor old woman shrieked and begged for mercy, but the Murids seized her, tore off her veil, and Schamyl himself began to inflict the punishment. But at the fifth blow the unfortunate creature fell dead, and Schamyl flung himself on the ground with loud

lamentations; but soon rising, he declared that he would himself undergo the remaining ninety-five lashes, which he accordingly did; and, though his body was covered with bleeding wheals, he did not move a muscle. The messengers were ordered to depart, and say what they had seen; and no one ever appeared again at Dargo on such an errand.

In the tribes under Schamyl's government, every ten houses is obliged to furnish and maintain one armed warrior; and besides the force thus composed, he has, under the command of Hamsad Bey, a corps of Russian and Polish troops (who have deserted from the enemy), as well as a small park of artillery.

Prince Woronzoff endeavoured during his reign to conciliate the proud Circassians, not only by his condescending manners, but also by friendly acts; but it was

all in vain. Neither his gracious words nor his good deeds were appreciated by the mountaineers; and they never inspired any confidence.

The condition of the Eastern Caucasus is still less promising to the Russians, and though the populations of the Kabarda, and of the coast of the Caspian Sea, have become ostensibly more friendly to Russia, years must elapse before they can be depended on.

It was during the administration of Prince Woronzoff that Schamyl achieved his greatest feat of arms, and by the defeat of his apparently overwhelming forces, that the mountain chief acquired the fame and influence which have caused the subjection of several large districts of the Caucasus to Russia to be merely nominal. They have become so disaffected, that strong garrisons are required to keep a vigilant watch on

their movements, and this is the case with all the Western Lowlands on the Kouban, and on the line between the Kouban and Terek and the Black Sea coasts.

CHAPTER XI.

The grand objects Schamyl has had in view.—His religious system.—Three stages of progress.—The Murids.—The Naibs.—The Murschids.—Personal appearance of Schamyl.—His mode of life.—His present abode.—The future prospects of the Caucasians.

SCHAMYL, though now past his prime—as he is upwards of sixty years of age—is acknowledged to have been, in his time of vigour, a great soldier and a great man, with an intellect capable of originating grand ideas, and a character to develope them into great deeds. The purpose he had in view from the commencement of his career, was not only to emancipate the Caucasian races from the Russian dominion, but to effect their thorough reform from the vices which, for centuries, had enervated

and disgraced the followers of Mahomet. Perhaps this object was too gigantic to be accomplished in one human life; decidedly it was beyond the power of one individual, and therefore Schamyl's recent inactivity is the less surprising. From his mountain throne he hoped to reign over all the different races of the Caucasus, both as prophet and independent prince. But though he has been very successful in reviving the spirit of fanatical enthusiasm, among tribes hitherto entirely sunk in apathy and indifference; and though he can always swell the ranks of his followers by impassioned appeals and promises of future reward, he has become aware that before his new empire can be made permanently tenable, the old state of things must be entirely abrogated, and this would require both unity among the tribes, and a new development of his own power.

To promote the accomplishment of this purpose, therefore, he has adopted three methods. First, that of encouraging the revival of religious ardour; secondly, the exciting devotion to his own person; and, thirdly, effecting, as far as possible, the reconciliation of all the feuds between the different tribes.

The religious system of Schamyl has been partly derived from Hadji Ismael Effendi, by whom he was instructed in his youth, and still more from Kasi-Mullah. It may in many respects be regarded as a young and fresh offshoot from the aged and decaying trunk of Islamism.

According to this system, it is supposed that man must pass through four preliminary stages before he can rise to a condition entitling him to the happiness of Paradise. The first stage is that in which is required the strict observance of all external ordi-

nances of Islam, such as prayer, pilgrimages, almsgiving, honesty, truthfulness, and so on. The second stage requires more than mere obedience to positive ordinances; it demands virtue, and the elevation of the character to the performance of good deeds. In the third, man attains to self-knowledge and faith, and occupies himself with the contemplation of nature and of the Creator. This is the highest development of mind.

Practically, Schamyl ranks in the first class the great multitude of mankind, who, being unable to think for themselves, must be tied down by external forms—sometimes persuasive, sometimes constraining. On the second stage he places the Murids, since they are striving to acquire virtue, whose necessity they acknowledge. They obey the dictates of the law, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the fruit of

which it is the germ. The third stage is occupied by the Naibs, who have a more exalted sense of virtue than the Murids, and are representatives of the Murschid, Schamyl, whose position is the highest attainable, and whose worth and accomplishments entitle him to receive all revelations and inspirations from above and to be one with God.

Thus the Murschid is the sun, giving light to the Naibs, his moons, who, with the Murids, their stars, illuminate from their height the people below. The Naibs act as viceroys to Schamyl, govern the several districts to which they are appointed, give judgment in the name of the Murschid, decide cases of minor importance on their own authority, and have command over a thousand armed men, while the Murids command only one hundred. In time of need a Murid, clothed in a blood-red gar-

ment, rushes through the country, as the bearer of the fiery cross formerly did in the Highlands of Scotland, and calls on all who are able to carry arms to rally round the banner of the prophet.

To keep up the fanatical zeal of the people, Schamyl also employs Dervishes, who, with their Koran in one hand and their staff in the other, wander about in all directions, preaching and acting as physicians. They are much beloved among the mountaineers for their kindness and frugality of life, as well as admired for their eloquence.

Schamyl himself is a fine old man, of commanding stature and winning manners, very strict in his observance of the precepts of the Koran, and often confining himself for weeks to the seclusion of the mosque.

Before the people he never appears but in state, surrounded by his Murids; and

the multitude bow down before him in profound veneration, anxiously desiring permission to kiss the hem of his garment. Besides his Murids, he is also attended by his Mullahs, with their kalendas, or inkstands, who follow him to note down his commands. His general mode of living is extremely frugal; and his favourite residence, Dargo Vedenno, is a simple but solid structure, situated on a lofty rock, surrounded by impenetrable forests and precipices, and protected at its foot by a rapid river. It is a square fortress, enclosed by walls and towers, in one of which Schamyl occasionally resides, but at other times he occupies a flat-roofed house on its east side. The rooms of this house are carpeted, and ornamented by arms of rare beauty, captured from the enemy, while its walls bear inscriptions from the Koran. Before the fortress lies a village, occupied

chiefly by artisans; water is supplied by a stream that has been conducted from the hills into an immense reservoir in the middle of the fortress; and at a short distance from it is situated the provision store, where a large quantity of maize, corn, and millet is laid up.

The Circassians of the Western Caucasus, though not subject to Schamyl's rule, and in general not favourable to it, are largely adopting the Mahometan faith, and would probably be gained over to Schamyl's plans without difficulty, were he young enough to pursue them with activity.

He has succeeded among his own vassals, in substituting the penalties of a strict law for the terrible and destructive blood-revenge hitherto prevalent among them; and, within a very short space of time, he has composed an organised state out of a multitude of mutually hostile robber-bands;

and this organisation will, in all probability, become the basis of their future progress towards a civilization that will carry them ultimately beyond the pale of the crescent.

THE END.

APPENDIX.

THE ASCENT OF MOUNT ARARAT BY FIVE ENGLISHMEN.

(TIMES, *Friday, August* 22, 1856.)

THE following account of an ascent of Mount Ararat, recently accomplished by a party of Englishmen, may be found of interest.

"On the 11th of August, 1856, a party, consisting of Major Alick J. Fraser, the Rev. Walter Thursby, Mr. James Theobold, jun., of Winchester, Mr. John Evans, of Darley Abbey, Derbyshire, and myself, started from Bayazid on this new expedition. We were accompanied by two servants and a zaptieh, or native policeman, and by the kindness of the Kaïmakam, Hadjee Mustapha Effendi, we were consigned to the special charge of Issak Bey, a

chief of the Ararat Kurds, under whose safeguard we had nothing to fear from the plundering habits of his followers. At Bayazid we had provided ourselves each with a stout pole between five and six feet long, furnished with a spike at one end and a hook at the other.

"Crossing the plain of Ararat, we commenced the ascent through a wide ravine, enclosed between vast ridges of volcanic rock. For three hours we wound our way through rugged defiles, occasionally traversing fertile plateaux, verdant with growing crops of wheat and barley. Our surefooted little horses, accustomed to this sort of work, picked their way through the most breakneck places, and brought us in safety to the black goats'-hair tents of our host, which were pitched on some pasture lands on the southern slope of Greater Ararat, about 8,000 feet above the level of the sea. Hither the Kurds resort in summer with their flocks and herds, returning to the villages of the plain at the approach of winter.

"A portion of the chief's tent was set

apart for our use; the floor was covered with gay-coloured carpets, a fat sheep was killed, and everything was supplied that Kurdish hospitality could suggest.

"At 3 o'clock next morning we were on the move, all except Mr. Thursby, who, to our regret, was obliged by indisposition to remain in the tent. Three hours of continued ascent on foot brought us to the base of the cone. Here Major Fraser bore off to the south-east, and took a line of his own, while Mr. Theobold, Mr. Evans, and I, commenced the ascent on the southern side, keeping to the snow, which presented an unbroken surface to the very summit.

"To my two friends, who are experienced Alpine climbers, this was easy work, but it soon began to tell unfavourably on my unaccustomed limbs. For a time we kept pretty well together; by degrees, however, Mr. Theobold began to forge ahead, followed by Mr. Evans, while I brought up the rear as well as I could. But my strength was fast giving way, and when about halfway up the cone, I found myself utterly un-

able to proceed any further. Accordingly, there being no alternative but to descend, I sat on the snow and shot down with the velocity of an arrow, undoing in a few minutes the laborious toil of nearly three hours. This was a keen disappointment, amply repaid to me however, as will appear by and bye.

"At the foot of the cone I found Issak Bey, who with a couple of his people had come out to watch our progress. He looked on my failure as a matter of course, and seemed to think the others, too, must soon give in; but no, up they went higher and higher, his interest and surprise keeping pace with their ascent.

"For some hours we watched their upward course, the sharp naked eye of the Kurd plainly discerning what I was able to see only with the aid of a telescope. At length, at 1.45, Mr. Theobold crowned the summit. Great was the astonishment of the Chief. 'Mashallah!' he exclaimed, 'God is great!—What wonderful people these English are; a few of them come here, and

without any difficulty walk to the top of that holy mountain, a thing that never was done by man before. Wonderful, wonderful!'

"At 2.50 Mr. Evans reached the summit. He and Mr. Theobold made the descent together, by the same track that they ascended, and returned to the tents about sunset.

"We must now follow the movements of Major Fraser, who, as already stated, took a line of his own. Not being accustomed like the others to snow work, he chose a ridge of stone, which led up about two-thirds of the ascent. Over this he made his way without much difficulty, and then, taking to the snow, he patiently toiled upwards till within a few hundred feet of the summit. Here, in attempting to cross over to what appeared a more practicable line, he slipped on some thinly covered ice, and, losing all control over himself, he shot down with fearful velocity, now head, now foot foremost, over a space of about a thousand feet. By wonderful efforts and presence of

mind, he succeeded in arresting his perilous descent, and, scrambling with difficulty to a rocky ridge that protruded above the snow, he climbed over it with immense labour; and thus recovering his lost way, he won the height about 3.30, having been thrown back full three hours by his mishap. He descended on the traces of Messrs. Theobold and Evans, and regained the tents at midnight, having been about twenty hours on foot.

"On the 13th, about 2 P.M., Mr. Thursby and I started from the tents, accompanied by two Kurds, carrying rugs, greatcoats, and a small supply of provisions. We proceeded slowly and leisurely until we reached about one-third the ascent of the cone. There we were obliged to dismiss the Kurds, who, from religious fear, refused either to proceed further or to spend the night on the mountain; but, to insure their return in the morning for the rugs, etc., we thought it expedient to detain their arms, the dearest possession of these nomade people.

"As we had neither of us much fancy to

try the ascent by the snow, we chose a new line of our own over a rocky surface, facing nearly due south, which the wind and sun had bared nearly to the summit.

"Left now to ourselves, we selected a spot to pass the night, piled up stones to windward as a shelter against the cold, and, having dined heartily, we made ourselves as comfortable as possible. We saw the sun set in indescribable glory, throwing the shadow of the vast mountain far away over Georgia and Aderbijan, and even darkening the distant haze of the Eastern horizon.

"Wrapping ourselves in our rugs, we passed the night as well as could be expected, and at peep of dawn on the 14th we resumed the ascent. It certainly was toilsome and slow, but was, nevertheless, satisfactory.

"From an elevation of about 14,000 feet above the sea, we saw the sun rise in unclouded majesty, lighting up simultaneously to our view vast tracts of the Russian, Persian, and Turkish empires; that was a glorious sight never to be forgotten.

"About 1,200 feet from the summit, we came upon an oak cross that had been fixed there in the rock by Professor Abich in the year 1845; it was in perfect preservation, and the inscription, in Russian characters, was still legible.

"This was the most difficult part of our ascent, the obstructions were frequent, and the climbing at times perilous; but caution and perseverance enabled us to overcome everything, and at 9 A.M. we had the satisfaction of standing on the highest point of the mountain. Here I stuck to the hilt in the snow a kama, or short double-edged sword, which we found at the foot of Abich's cross. Here, also, as loyal Britons, we drank the health of our beloved Queen in brandy. Her Majesty will perhaps deign to accept this expression of allegiance on considering that hers is probably the first name that has been pronounced on that solemn height since it was quitted by the great patriarch of the human race; for no record or tradition exists of the ascent having ever been made before, although repeatedly tried

by men of different countries, both European and Asiatic. Professor Abich made several attempts, but failed in all, as is proved by the position of the cross, by the testimony of the natives, and even by the confession of his own countrymen.

"We descended on the tracks of the others, and got back to the tents about 4 P.M.

"The whole surface of Mount Ararat bears evidence of having been subjected to violent volcanic action, being seamed and scored with deep ravines. The rocky ridges that protrude from the snow are either basalt or tufa; and near the summit we found some bits of pumice on a spot which still emits a strong sulphurous smell.

"The summit itself is nearly level, of a triangular shape, the base being about 200 yards in length, the perpendicular about 300.

"The highest point is at the apex of the triangle, which points nearly due west; separated from it by a hollow is another point of nearly equal altitude, and the base of the

triangle is an elevated ridge, forming a third eminence. These three points stand out in distinct relief on a clear day.

"The snow on the top is almost as dry as powder, and in walking over it we did not sink more than half-way to the knee. The impression left on my mind is, that the summit is an extinct crater filled with snow. We experienced no difficulty of respiration, except being sooner blown by exertion than we should have been at a lower level. The cold was intense; and though a perfect calm prevailed at the time at the foot of the cone, as we afterwards learnt, a keen wind was blowing from the west, which raised a blinding mist of fine snow that prevented us taking any distant views.

"As may be supposed, our success has created no small sensation throughout the country; the fame of it preceded us wherever we went. It was announced as a sort of wonder to the caravans travelling eastward; and the Kaïmakan of Bayazid has made it the subject of a special report to Constantinople.

"From the sacred character of the mountain, and the traditions associated with it throughout the east, identical as they are with scriptural records, I am inclined to think that a degree of importance will attach to this performance, in popular estimation, beyond what is due to a mere exhibition of nerve or muscle, and this, no doubt, will tell in favour of our national prestige.

"ROBERT STUART, Major,
"*Special Service, Asia Major.*
"*Erzeroum, July* 26."

The Russian Caucasian Calendar for 1846, which was taken from the library of the Governor of Sebastopol, gives the following statement of the administrative arrangements of the provinces of the Caucasus.

Tiflis (lat. 41 north; long. 45 east) is the seat of the chief military governor or lord-lieutenant. Here the general staff is

established, as well as military and gymnastic schools, etc.; it is the head quarters of the military police; and here is also, besides the civil governor's chancery and other offices, the palace of the treasury, the civil and criminal courts of justice, the tribunal of public inspection, the exchequer or palace of finance, etc. Tiflis is besides the centre of all the military roads, and of communication with the following places:

Gori (lat. 41½), Thelaff, Achalzich, Erivan, Nachitchevan, Alexandropol, Elizabethpol, Kutais, Schamachu, Schuscha, Lankoran, Backu or Baku, Derbent, Stavropol, Cignache, Nych, Kub, Patigorsk, Kilsan. The last five places mentioned in this list will probably not be found on any map or chart, and must necessarily be of recent date.

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